

José Pablo García

LIFE UNDER OCCUPATION

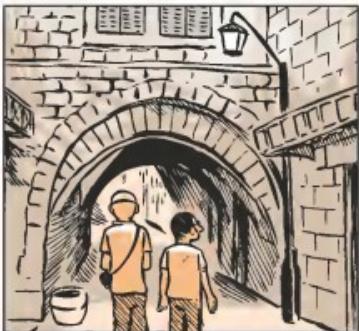
A journey through Palestine



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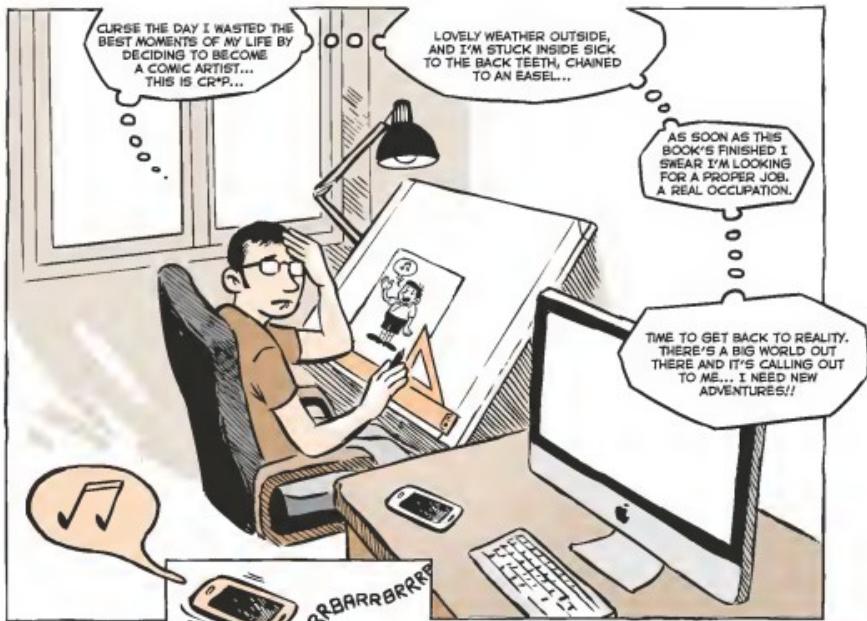
After several decades, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is viewed as a frozen conflict, a history of hatred spanning over a hundred years. The path to nowhere twists this way and that depending on whoever is in the White House or the Israeli parliament, with no resolution in sight. We tend to oversimplify the narrative by talking of a Wall, which is much like all those other Walls that have appeared at many points in history. Or we report on the fierce clashes between the military and radical groups – stories that make a frequent appearance on the front pages. The reality is far more vivid and cruel: the victims, many of whom are young people and children, are suffering drawn-out agony every day.

We wanted to offer a fresh perspective on 50 years of occupation in Palestine, to look at its effects on the ordinary lives of over 4 million people. *Life under Occupation* focuses on the impact the conflict has had on access to clean water and on the livelihoods of Palestinians.

These difficulties should not have arisen, given the protections afforded by International Humanitarian Law (IHL). We have no desire to point fingers at anyone. We simply gather evidence and facts, and bear witness to what the occupation has entailed for the most vulnerable sectors of the population. Our work is made possible thanks to the support of institutions such as the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), ensuring that every person has access to clean water and food. This is our area of expertise and we achieve our goals in up to 50 countries day in, day out.

A graphic novel seems the best form to make a statement because it offers a powerful medium through which to offer our testimony. This story is the chronicle of a 10-day journey through the occupied Palestinian territory from Nablus to Gaza, from the pen of graphic novel artist José Pablo García. The irresistible combination of his youth and talent will undoubtedly connect with a readership of all ages and reveal to them the human side of those who suffer under the occupation. We write in defiance of the indifference which generates and sustains lifelong conflicts. We write with empathy for other human beings, empathy is the motivation behind all forms of solidarity. It requires courage to see into the lives of others, and only then can we be ready to do everything in our power to improve those lives.

Olivier Longué
Chief Executive Officer of Action Against Hunger Spain



A FEW WEEKS LATER I FOUND MYSELF AT THE ACTION AGAINST HUNGER HQ IN MADRID TO ATTEND A SERIES OF BRIEFINGS AND TO CLEAR UP ANY DOUBTS ABOUT THE JOURNEY...



IT'S GREAT THAT YOU'VE AGREED TO DO THIS!

WELL, I HAVE TO ADMIT I'VE BEEN FEELING A TAD NERVOUS...

THAT'S ONLY NORMAL, IT'LL BE MY FIRST TOO AND I'M FAIRLY ANXIOUS ABOUT IT...



FIRST I HAD A BRIEFING WITH CARMEN, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS...



THEN I MET WITH ALICIA, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS...



THEN THERE WAS GABRIEL, HEAD OF MIDDLE EAST...



FOLLOWED BY CHEMÍA, HEAD OF WATER AND SANITATION...



PACO, DIRECTOR OF ADVOCACY...



...AND FINALLY CARLOS, MANAGER FOR FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOOD.



OK, WE WON'T MEET UP AGAIN UNTIL WE LEAVE. GOOD TO MEET YOU.

SAME HERE!



PHEW, DIZZY WITH AN OVERLOAD OF INFORMATION RIGHT NOW...

OH, BY THE WAY—LUIS, THE DIRECTOR FOR OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY, IS PASSING THROUGH MALAGA IN A FEW DAYS, AND HE'S REALLY LIKE TO MEET YOU FOR ANOTHER BRIEFING.

ANOTHER BRIEFING? WHAT IS IT WITH THESE PEOPLE AND THEIR MEETINGS?



A FEW DAYS LATER WE WERE ON OUR WAY, CONNECTING IN BRUSSELS. A DELAY LEFT US WITH JUST 15 MINUTES TO MAKE IT TO CHECK-IN, WHICH WAS ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE TERMINAL.



WE HAD BEEN WARNED ABOUT ISRAEL'S STRICT AIRPORT SECURITY MEASURES. MAX GAVE ME SOME TIPS.



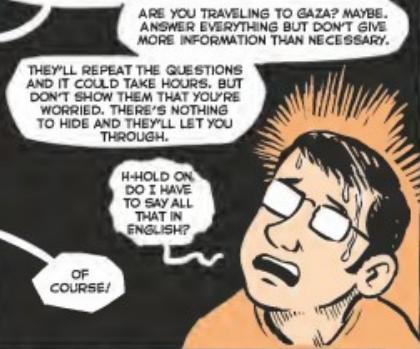
WE ARRIVED ON TIME AT BEN GUIRON AIRPORT IN TEL AVIV...



AND THERE IN THE QUEUE WE HAD OUR FIRST EXPERIENCE OF CULTURAL IMMERSION. A GROUP OF JEWS WAS SAYING MORNING PRAYERS BEFORE THE FLIGHT. I WAS INTRIGUED BY THE SMALL OBJECTS TIED TO THEIR HEADS AND ARMS...



WHERE ARE YOU STAYING? JERUSALEM. WHICH AREA? BEIT HANINA. THE REASON FOR YOUR JOURNEY? TO LEARN ABOUT WATER AND FOOD PROJECTS, AND TO VISIT SOME OF THE CITIES...



BUT THERE WAS NO DRAMA TO BE HAD. NO TERRIFYING INTERROGATIONS. AFTER ALL THAT PREPARATION!

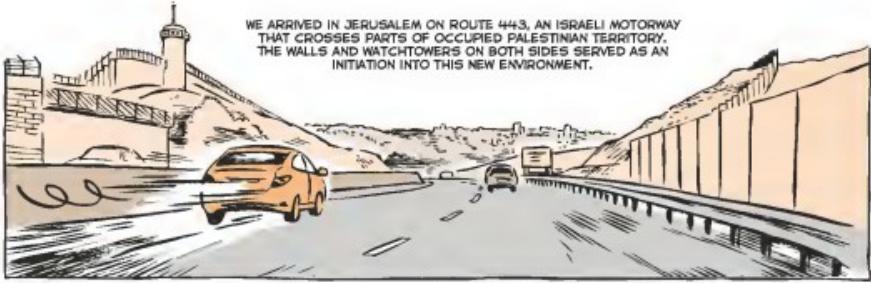




JERUSALEM

A divided city

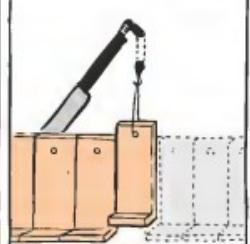
WE ARRIVED IN JERUSALEM ON ROUTE 443, AN ISRAELI MOTORWAY THAT CROSSES PARTS OF OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY. THE WALLS AND WATCHTOWERS ON BOTH SIDES SERVED AS AN INITIATION INTO THIS NEW ENVIRONMENT.



IN 2002, THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT PASSED A LAW TO CONSTRUCT A SEPARATION WALL INTENDED TO PROTECT ISRAEL FROM POSSIBLE ATTACKS BY PALESTINIAN TERRORISTS.



AND SO IT WAS BUILT: COMPLETE WITH ELECTRIC FENCES, DITCHES, BARBED WIRE, SAND STRIPS TO DETECT FOOTPRINTS AND AN ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM.



TWO THIRDS OF THE PLANNED 712 KILOMETERS OF WALL HAVE ALREADY BEEN COMPLETED.

THE ACTION AGAINST HUNGER GUEST HOUSE WAS IN BEIT HANINA, A NEIGHBORHOOD 8 KILOMETERS NORTH OF CENTRAL JERUSALEM.



I NOTICED BLACK WATER-STORAGE DRUMS ON THE ROOFS OF ALL THE BUILDINGS. THEY FORM AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE LANDSCAPE IN THE CITIES OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORY.

RICARDO, THE ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR FOR ACTION AGAINST HUNGER IN JERUSALEM, WAS WAITING FOR US.



WE LEFT OUR LUGGAGE THERE AND WALKED TO HEADQUARTERS, WHICH WAS JUST FIVE MINUTES AWAY.



WE MET OMAR, WHO GAVE US A BRIEFING ON THE VISIT WE'D BE MAKING TO HEBRON IN TWO DAYS' TIME.

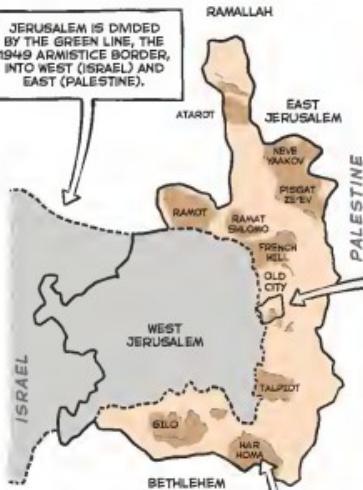


RICARDO SHOWED UP...

OK GUYS, I'M DONE FOR TODAY. IF YOU FEEL LIKE TAKING IN THE SIGHTS, I'M ALL YOURS!



JERUSALEM IS DIVIDED BY THE GREEN LINE, THE 1949 ARMISTICE BORDER, INTO WEST (ISRAEL) AND EAST (PALESTINE).



AS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY, THERE ARE FREQUENT CLASHES IN THIS AREA, AS THERE ARE SEVERAL ISRAELI COLONIAL SETTLEMENTS HERE.

KILOMETERS

MUNICIPAL LIMIT
ESTABLISHED
BY ISRAEL
1967-1993.

THE GREEN LINE (1949 ARMISTICE BORDER) DIVIDES JERUSALEM INTO EAST (PALESTINE) AND WEST (JERUSALEM).

PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

ISRAELI TERRITORY

ISRAELI COLONIAL SETTLEMENTS

RICARDO
WANTED US
TO SEE
THE OLD CITY.

AND THERE IS
THE DAMASCUS
GATE.



YOU CAN PASS
THROUGH IT
TO THE MUSLIM
QUARTER IN THE
OLD CITY.



YOU CAN SEE THAT THE
AREA IS HEAVILY GUARDED
BY ISRAELI FORCES. LATELY
THERE HAVE BEEN CLASHES
THERE THAT HAVE ENDED
IN TRAGEDY.



THE OLD CITY IN JERUSALEM HAS BECOME A QUINTESSENTIAL TOURIST ATTRACTION, PACKED WITH SHOPS AND RESTAURANTS. IT IS MADE UP OF FOUR QUARTERS AND COVERS AN AREA OF AROUND ONE SQUARE KILOMETER.

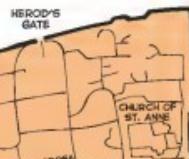
THE CHRISTIAN QUARTER

...WAS BUILT AROUND THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHER, AND IS ONE OF THE MOST SACRED PLACES IN CHRISTIANITY. IT IS CONTROLLED BY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH. NOTABLY, THE GREEK ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE, FRANCISCAN MONASTERY OF ST. SAVOUR AND LATIN PATRIARCHATE ARE ALSO FOUND HERE.



THE DAMASCUS GATE

...DEVELOPED AROUND HARAM AL SHARIF (AL AQSA MOSQUE). THE QUARTER INCLUDES SACRED PLACES THAT ARE RELEVANT TO OTHER RELIGIONS, SUCH AS THE VIA DOLOROSA FOR CHRISTIANS OR THE KOTEL HAKATAN (OR THE LITTLE WESTERN WALL) WHICH IS HIGHLY FREQUENTED BY ORTHODOX AND ULTRA-ORTHODOX JEWS.



LIONS' GATE

TEMPLE MOUNT OR HARAM AL SHARIF (AL AQSA MOSQUE)

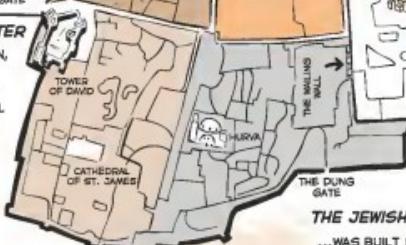
...THIS ENCLOSURE IS A SACRED PLACE FOR JEWS AND MUSLIMS.

THE ARMENIAN QUARTER

...WHICH IS ALSO CHRISTIAN, DEVELOPED AROUND THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. JAMES. IT IS A PEACEFUL NEIGHBORHOOD. ECCLESIASTICAL INSTITUTIONS ARE LOCATED AWAY BEHIND THE HIGH WALLS OF MONASTERIES AND CHURCHES, LENDING THE PLACE AN AIR OF MYSTERY.

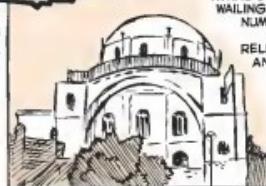


ZION GATE



THE JEWISH QUARTER

...WAS BUILT NEXT TO THE WAILING WALL, IT HOUSES NUMEROUS YESHIVOT (SCHOOLS FOR RELIGIOUS STUDIES) AND SYNAGOGUES, IN PARTICULAR HURVA SYNAGOGUE.



WE WANDERED IN AMAZEMENT THROUGH THE MARKETS, WE VISITED THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHER, AND WE DINED AT A LEBANESE RESTAURANT IN THE CHRISTIAN QUARTER.

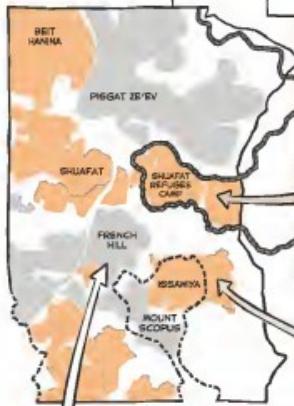


THE NEXT DAY WE TOOK A TOUR AROUND JERUSALEM.



THE SHUAFAT REFUGEE CAMP WAS BUILT IN 1965 TO HOUSE REFUGEE PALESTINIANS IN THE WAKE OF THE 1948 WAR. IT IS LOCATED NEXT TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF SHUAFAT IN EAST JERUSALEM.

IN 1967, AFTER THE SIX-DAY WAR, ISRAEL OCCUPIED WEST BANK, WHICH INCLUDES EAST JERUSALEM.



IN 2002 A WALL BEGAN TO GO UP, IT SEPARATED THIS AREA (ALONG WITH OTHERS IN EAST JERUSALEM) FROM THE REST OF THE WEST BANK, REINFORCING THE INTENT OF ISRAELI AUTHORITIES IN THE ISRAEL ADMINISTRATION THAT WISH TO RECLAIM EAST JERUSALEM AS PART OF THEIR TERRITORY.

WE WALKED THE STEEP STREETS OF ISSAWIYA, A FAIRLY RUN-DOWN AND TROUBLED NEIGHBORHOOD.

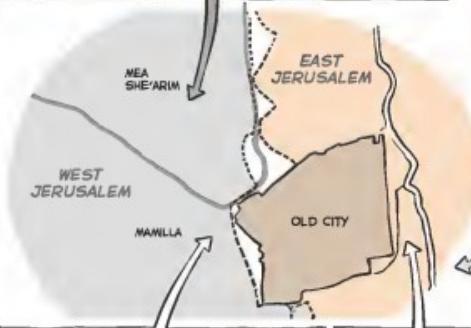


36% OF THE POPULATION OF JERUSALEM IS MADE UP OF PALESTINIANS FROM EAST JERUSALEM; JUST 12% OF THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET IS ALLOCATED TO ARAB NEIGHBORHOODS.

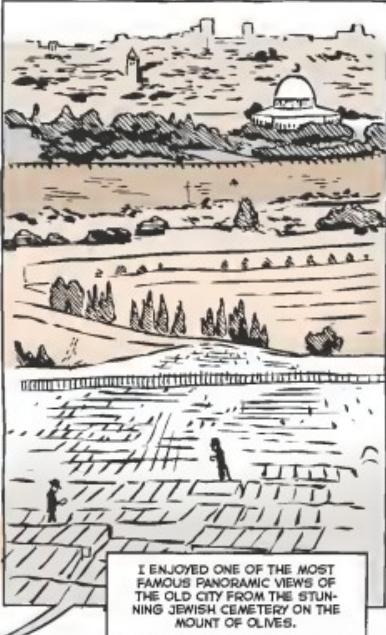
THE FIRST UNIVERSITY OF ISRAEL, THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY, ESTABLISHED ONE OF ITS CAMPUSES NEAR THE FRENCH HILL COLONIAL SETTLEMENT IN MOUNT SCOPUS. THERE ARE WONDERFUL VIEWS OF THE OLD CITY FROM HERE AND YOU CAN EVEN SEE AS FAR AS THE WEST BANK CITY OF BETHLEHEM.



WE WALKED THROUGH THE PICTURESQUE NEIGHBORHOOD OF MEA SHE'ARIM IN WEST JERUSALEM, WHERE ULTRA-ORTHODOX JEWS LIVE. I THOUGHT WE HAD STEPPED BACK IN TIME BECAUSE OF THE WAY PEOPLE WERE DRESSED.

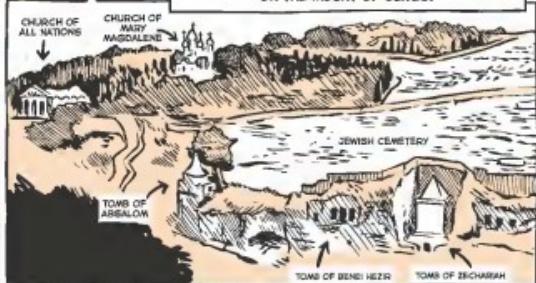


WE ALSO TOOK A STROLL AROUND THE MODERN OPEN-AIR SHOPPING CENTER IN MAMILLA, WHICH WAS BUILT IN 2007. IT IS TEEMING WITH RESTAURANTS, SHOPS AND ART GALLERIES.



I ENJOYED ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS PANORAMIC VIEWS OF THE OLD CITY FROM THE STUNNING JEWISH CEMETERY ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

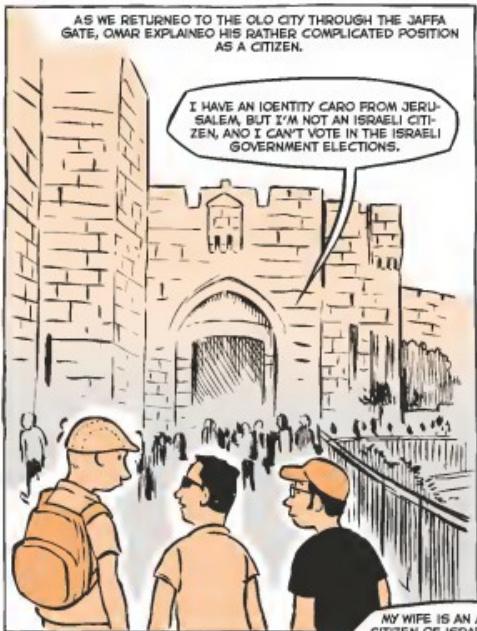
THEN WE MADE OUR WAY TO THE CITY WALL TO CONTEMPLATE ALL THE MONUMENTS ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.



THE OTTOMANS BUILT AN ENTRANCE IN THE RIGHT-HAND SIDE OF THE WALL....

HAMID AND OMAR WERE EXCELLENT GUIDES, AND THEY HAD AN INFECTIOUS ENTHUSIASM FOR THE HISTORY OF THEIR CITY.



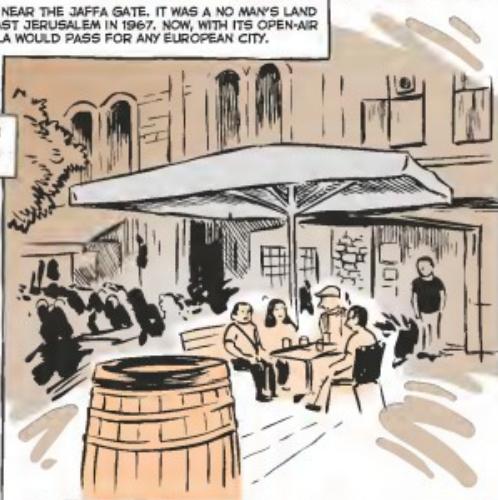




ONCE THE SHOW HAD FINISHED...



WE WANDERED THROUGH MAMILLA, A NEIGHBORHOOD NEAR THE JAFFA GATE. IT WAS A NO MAN'S LAND FROM 1948 UNTIL ISRAEL OCCUPIED AND ANNEXED EAST JERUSALEM IN 1967. NOW, WITH ITS OPEN-AIR SHOPPING CENTER AND RESTAURANTS, MAMILLA WOULD PASS FOR ANY EUROPEAN CITY.





THE SOUTHERN WEST BANK

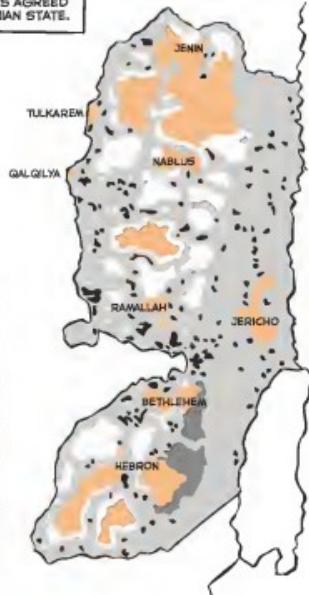
From Hebron to Bethlehem

THE NEXT DAY, WE GOT READY FOR OUR JOURNEY TO AREA C IN HEBRON.

IN 1993, YITZHAK RABIN, BILL CLINTON AND YASSER ARAFAT SIGNED THE OSLO ACCORDS. THREE AREAS WERE ESTABLISHED AND A TRANSITIONAL PERIOD OF FIVE YEARS WAS AGREED UPON FOR NEGOTIATIONS TO BE CONSOLIDATED IN ORDER TO CREATE A PALESTINIAN STATE.



THOSE AREAS WERE INTENDED TO BECOME THE FUTURE INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE.



BUT IN THE END, THE INTERIM NATURE OF THAT AGREEMENT WILL NEVER RESOLVE. THE DIVISION CONTINUES TO EXIST TODAY.

AREA A

IS UNDER THE PALESTINE AUTHORITY'S CIVIL AND SECURITY CONTROL AND COMPRIMES THE SEVEN MAJOR PALESTINIAN CITIES.

AREA B

IS UNDER THE PALESTINE AUTHORITY'S CIVIL CONTROL AND UNDER ISRAEL'S SECURITY CONTROL.

AREA C

IS UNDER ISRAEL'S CIVIL AND SECURITY CONTROL. IT CONSTITUTES AROUND 63% OF PALESTINIAN TERRITORY, AND CONSISTS MAINLY OF RURAL AREAS.

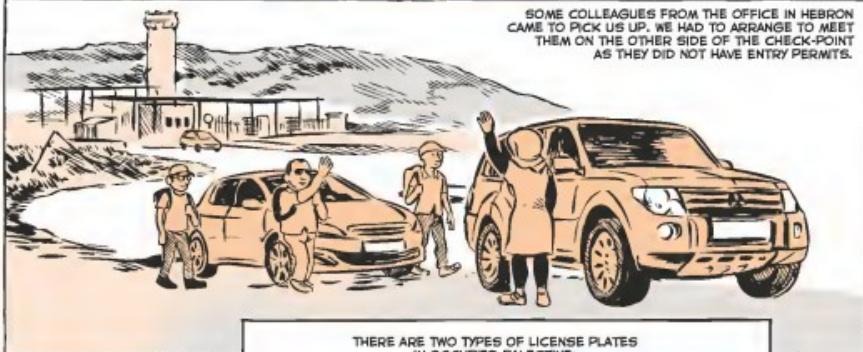
ISRAELI COLONIAL SETTLEMENTS



NATURAL RESERVES UNDER ISRAELI CONTROL



SOME COLLEAGUES FROM THE OFFICE IN HEBRON CAME TO PICK US UP. WE HAD TO ARRANGE TO MEET THEM ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CHECK-POINT AS THEY DID NOT HAVE ENTRY PERMITS.



THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF LICENSE PLATES IN OCCUPIED PALESTINE:

6 · 6706 - 98 U P

I NOTICED THAT THE LICENSE PLATES ON THE CARS WERE VERY DIFFERENT...

VEHICLES WITH PALESTINE PLATES, SHOWING GREEN NUMBERS ON A WHITE BACKGROUND, ARE NOT PERMITTED TO CIRCULATE INSIDE ISRAEL OR AROUND THE AREAS IN PALESTINE THAT LIE OUTSIDE THE WALL.

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VEHICLES WITH ISRAELI PLATES, SHOWING BLACK NUMBERS ON A YELLOW BACKGROUND, CAN CIRCULATE UNRESTRICTED AROUND ISRAEL AND PALESTINE.

WE WENT TO VISIT THE VILLAGES OF UMM AL-KHAIR AND SUSIYA.

JERUSALEM
BETHLEHEM

HEBRON
YATTA
UMM AL-KHAIR
SUSIYA

ON THE WAY WE SAW COUNTLESS SHACKS DOTTED AROUND THE SEMI-DESERT HILLS, MANY OF THEM HUDDLED ALONG THE EDGE OF THE HIGHWAY.



OUR COMPANIONS WERE FATIMA, HEAD OF THE FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOOD UNIT...

...AND LUJAY, LIVESTOCK EXPERT.

THIS HIGHWAY WAS BUILT BY THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE A LINK TO THE ISRAELI COLONIAL SETTLEMENTS.

TO OUR LEFT LAY THE MODERN AND COMFORTABLE CHALETS OF CARMEL, SUPPORTED BY ISRAELI GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES.



AND RIGHT NEXT TO THAT SETTLEMENT WE FOUND UMM AL-KHAIR, WHOSE PATRIARCH SULEIMAN KATHALEEN CAME TO GREET US WITH ONE OF HIS GRANDSONS.



SULEIMAN WAS JUST EIGHT YEARS OLD WHEN NAKBA, "THE DISASTER," OCCURRED—IN WHICH INHABITANTS FROM 530 PALESTINIAN VILLAGES WERE FORCIBLY DISPLACED DURING THE 1948 WAR. SULEIMAN'S FAMILY BELONGED TO ONE OF THE JAHALIN TRIBES IN TEL ARAD IN THE NEGEV DESERT, AND THEY HAD TO FLEE.



IN 1965 THEY ARRIVED AT THESE LANDS, WHICH THEY BOUGHT FROM THE AUTHORITIES OF YATTA IN EXCHANGE FOR ONE HUNDRED CAMELS.



BUT AFTER THE OSLO ACCORDS, THE MAJORITY OF THOSE LANDS WERE CONFISCATED.

THE COMMUNITY, WHICH IS MADE UP OF FIVE FAMILIES, IS NOT ALLOWED TO LIVE OFF-GRID AND BUY WATER TANKS AT EXORBITANT PRICES.

THEY ARE NOT PERMITTED TO BUILD.

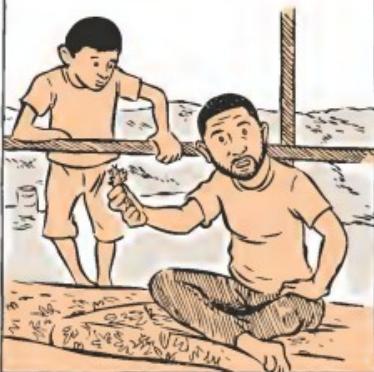


THEY WANT US TO LEAVE, BUT WE'RE NOT GOING TO GIVE UP ANOTHER INCH OF OUR LAND IN SPITE OF ALL THE HARASSMENT WE'VE ENDURED.

SO WE CARRY ON LIVING HERE AND RESISTING. WE DON'T WANT OUR CHILDREN TO SUFFER EXILE AGAIN.

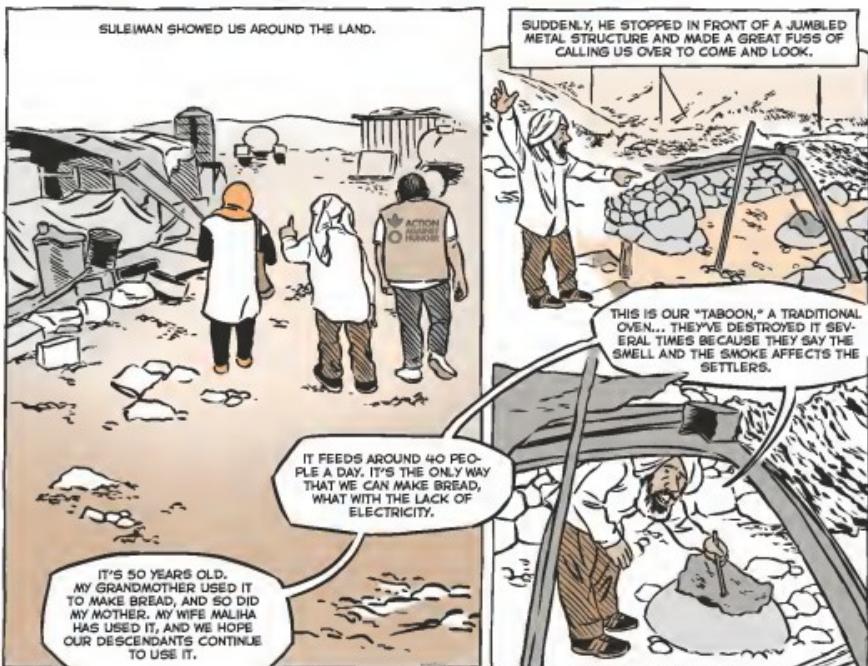


HIS SON BILAL TELLS US THAT HE CULTIVATES THYME DURING THE SUMMER SEASON, AS THE SOIL HERE IS VERY DRY AND THE HERB DOESN'T NEED MUCH WATER. THEN HE SELLS IT IN HEBRON.



HE DEDICATES THE REST OF THE YEAR TO LOOKING AFTER AND FATTENING UP HIS TEN GOATS.





SULEIMAN, QUITE UPSET, SHOWED US THE REMAINS OF A BRICK HOUSE THAT HAD BEEN DEMOLISHED A FEW MONTHS AGO.



WE THOUGHT OF HIM AS A MAN FULL OF STRENGTH AND DIGNITY, WHO WILL NEVER LOSE HOPE OF A BETTER FUTURE FOR HIS FAMILY.

IN SPITE OF EVERYTHING... ALLAH IS GREAT!



WE WENT TO AN ANIMAL HUSBANDRY FARM NEARBY WHICH WORKS WITH BEDOUINS IN THE AREA...



...GIVING THEM ADVICE SO THAT THEY CAN IMPROVE THE CARE OF THEIR GOATS AND GET THE BEST OUT OF THEM.



LUAY, WHO WOULD BE OUR DRIVER THAT DAY, TEACHES COURSES ON HOW TO FEED ANIMALS AT LOW COST WITH A FODDER MADE UP OF A MIXTURE OF CORN, SOY BEANS AND SUNFLOWER SEEDS.



OIL, SALT AND SPECIAL COMPONENTS DESIGNED TO PREVENT DISEASE ARE ADDED TO THE MIXTURE.



A TON OF THIS FODDER COSTS 500 EUROS. A KILO OF MEAT FROM THE ANIMAL COSTS 25 EUROS AT THE COMMUNITY SHOPPING CENTER.

A EWE WILL TYPICALLY BEAR ONE LAMB A YEAR. LOCAL PEOPLE ARE TAUGHT TO IMPROVE BREEDING TECHNIQUES SO THAT EWES CAN BEAR THREE LAMBS IN TWO YEARS.



A EWE PROVIDES MILK FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY...



TWENTY WOMEN HAVE RECEIVED A PREGNANT EWE.



...AND ITS LAMBS CAN BE SOLD TO THE COOPERATIVES.

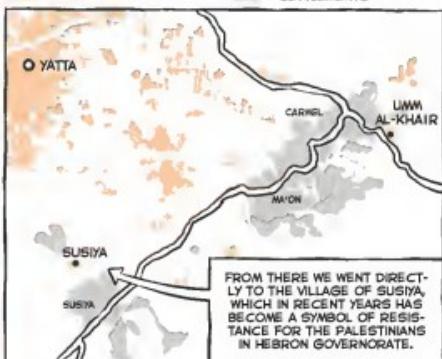


NEARBY, A BUILDING WAS BEING CONSTRUCTED, INTENDED FOR THE USE OF CIVILIAN EDUCATION THROUGH A PROGRAM OF VARIOUS COURSES AND THE PROMOTION OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ACTIVITY WITH THE CREATION OF A COOPERATIVE AND A COMMUNITY SHOPPING CENTER.



PALESTINE VILLAGES

ISRAELI COLONIAL SETTLEMENTS



FROM THERE WE WENT DIRECTLY TO THE VILLAGE OF SUSIYA, WHICH IN RECENT YEARS HAS BECOME A SYMBOL OF RESISTANCE FOR THE PALESTINIANS IN HEBRON GOVERNORATE.

THE 450 INHABITANTS LIVING IN SUSIYA ARE MEMBERS OF 47 FAMILIES. THEY ARE SANDWICHED BETWEEN AN ISRAELI SETTLEMENT AND AN ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE, FROM WHICH THE FAMILIES HAD BEEN EXPELLED IN 1986 WHEN THE REMAINS OF A SYNAGOGUE WERE DISCOVERED THERE.



SINCE THEN, THEIR HOUSES HAVE BEEN DESTROYED ON THREE OCCASIONS AND THEY LIVE IN PRECARIOUS HOVELS MADE FROM CANVAS AND PLASTIC, UNDER CONSTANT THREAT OF DISPOSSESSION AND FORCIBLE TRANSFER. ISRAEL IS PLANNING TO CONNECT THE ISRAELI COLONIAL SETTLEMENT IN SUSIYA WITH BOTH AN ADJACENT MILITARY BASE AND THE ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE OF THE SYNAGOGUE.



WE ENTERED A CONTAINER THAT DOUBLES AS THE LOCAL COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS.

EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE THE TITLE DEEDS TO THIS LAND, 80% OF OUR BUILDINGS ARE UNDER A DEMOLITION ORDER.

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING ISRAELI ONES, ARE HELPING US TO TAKE LEGAL ACTION.



THE SUPPORT PROVIDED BY SOME NGOs AND COUNTLESS ACTIVISTS—PALESTINE, ISRAELI AND INTERNATIONAL ALIKE—HAS PROVED TO BE INSTRUMENTAL IN HALTING THE DEMOLITIONS.



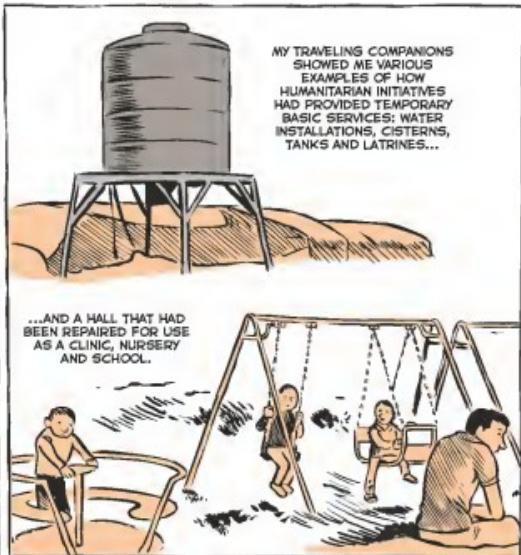
HIGH-PROFILE CULTURAL FIGURES HAVE ALSO WEIGHED IN WITH THEIR SUPPORT IN RECENT YEARS. THE NOBEL PRIZE-WINNING AUTHOR MARIO VARGAS LLOSA VISITED THIS TINY VILLAGE AND WROTE A NUMBER OF PIECES ON THE SUBJECT.



DEMOLITION OF SUSIYA WOULD BE HARMFUL AND PROVOCATIVE. WE URGE ISRAELI AUTHORITIES TO WORK WITH THE RESIDENTS OF THE VILLAGE TO FINALIZE A PLAN THAT ADDRESSES THE RESIDENTS' HUMANITARIAN NEEDS.

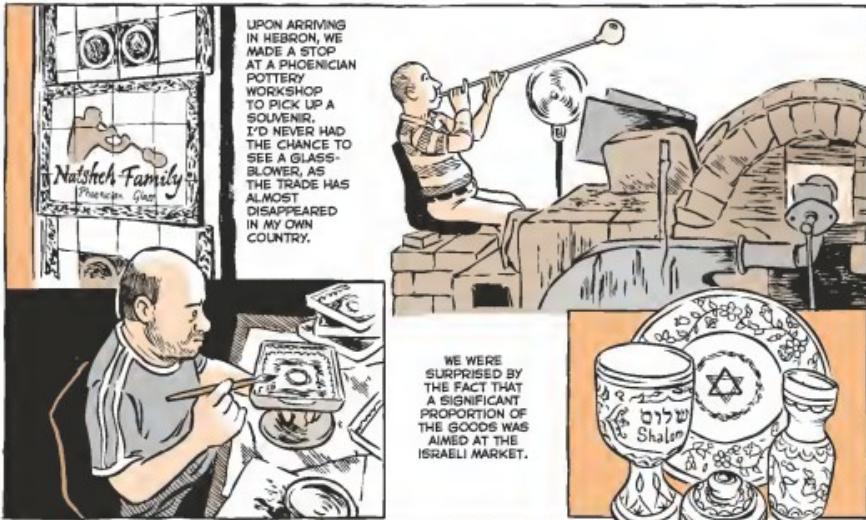
DIPLOMATS AND POLITICIANS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD HAVE SPOKEN OUT, SUCH AS JOHN KIRBY, SPOKESPERSON FOR THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE.

CURRENTLY, THE VILLAGERS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO TAKE THEIR SHEEP OUT TO PASTURE IN THE SURROUNDING FIELDS, OR TO BENEFIT FROM THE OLIVE TREES.



THESE SOLAR PANELS, THE ONLY SOURCE OF ENERGY FOR THE VILLAGE, WERE FINANCED BY EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS. THE PANELS ARE NOW UNDER A DEMOLITION ORDER.





UPON ARRIVING IN HEBRON, WE MADE A STOP AT A PHOENICIAN POTTERY WORKSHOP TO PICK UP A SOUVENIR. I'D NEVER HAD THE CHANCE TO SEE A GLASS-BLOWER, AS THIS TRADE HAS ALMOST DISAPPEARED IN MY OWN COUNTRY.

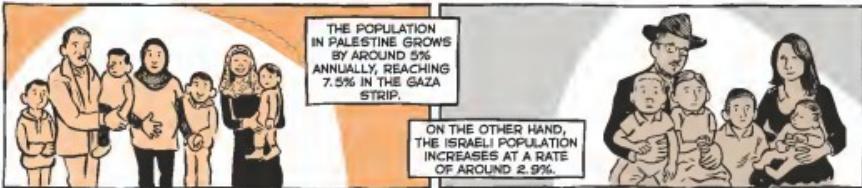


FOR DINNER WE HAD MANSAF, A TYPICAL BEDOUIN DISH. IT'S A RICE BROTH WITH GOAT YOGHURT COVERED WITH PIECES OF LAMB, ON A BREAD BASE.

WE WERE SURPRISED BY THE FACT THAT A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF THE GOODS WAS AIMED AT THE ISRAELI MARKET.



AHMED, HEAD OF ACTION AGAINST HUNGER IN HEBRON, HAD JOINED US FOR DINNER. DURING OUR AFTER-DINNER CHAT HE EXPLAINED THAT "BATTLE" OVER DEMOGRAPHICS HAD BEEN WAGED FOR DECADES.



A FAMILIAR SIGHT IN ARAB TOWNS: EVEN THOUGH IT WAS VERY LATE, SHOPS AND STALLS WERE STILL OPEN FOR BUSINESS.



AFTER THE SIX-DAY WAR IN 1967, VARIOUS FUNDAMENTALIST JEWISH GROUPS WANTED TO STOP THE OCCUPIED TERRITORY FROM BEING RECLAIMED. THEY BEGAN TO OCCUPY MORE PARTS OF THE CITY.



AFTER DECADES OF TENSIONS, THE HEBRON PROTOCOL WAS SIGNED IN 1997. IT WAS PART OF A TEMPORARY MEASURE INTENDED TO MITIGATE CONFLICT IN THE AREA. HEBRON WAS CONSEQUENTLY SPLIT IN TWO: ZONE H1, UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE PALESTINIAN NATIONAL AUTHORITY, AND ZONE H2, UNDER ISRAELI MILITARY CONTROL.



IT WAS THE EVE OF RAMADAN. THE STREETS WERE DECKED OUT WITH BRIGHT LIGHTS SIMILAR TO CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS.

HEBRON IS THE ONLY CITY IN PALESTINE WITH ISRAELI COLONIAL SETTLEMENTS IN ITS CENTER. OF ITS 200,000 INHABITANTS, AROUND 40,000 PALESTINIANS LIVE WITH 400-850 ISRAELI SETTLERS IN THE OLD CITY.



8,000 MORE ISRAELIS LIVE IN THE KIRYAT ARBA SETTLEMENT, ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF HEBRON.

WE ENTERED THE OLD CITY AND THE ATMOSPHERE WAS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT. THE STREETS WERE PRACTICALLY DESERTED AND FULL OF RUBBISH.



MANY PALESTINIAN BUSINESSES ARE OBLIGED TO CLOSE; OTHERS OPERATE UNDER RESTRICTED HOURS TO AVOID PROBLEMS WITH THE ISRAELI SETTLERS WHO LIVE ABOVE. AND IN SOME AREAS, OVERHEAD WIRE MESH AND NETTING PROTECTS PASSERS-BY FROM THE RUBBISH THAT IS THROWN OUT.



THE NEXT MORNING WE RETURNED TO JERUSALEM WITH FARID, PROJECT MANAGER FOR WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH).



WE SEIZED THE CHANCE TO MAKE A STOP IN BETHLEHEM.



I SAW THE CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY, WHICH HAD BEEN CONSTRUCTED UPON THE SPOT BELIEVED TO BE CHRIST'S BIRTHPLACE.



WE WERE STILL DOING THE TOURIST THING AND WENT SOUVENIR HUNTING...



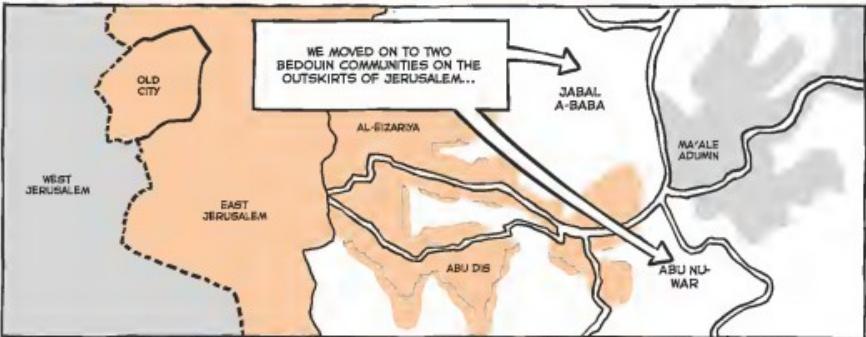
HEY GUYS! IF YOU WANT SOME GOOD PHOTOS, YOU'LL GET THE BEST SIGHTS OF BETHLEHEM FROM INSIDE THAT WORKSHOP...



ENJOY THE VIEW!!



WE MOVED ON TO TWO BEDOON COMMUNITIES ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF JERUSALEM...

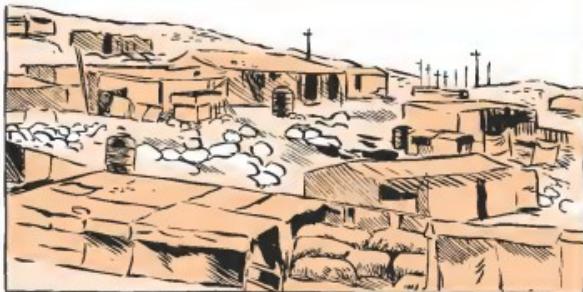




A VIEW FROM THE EAST

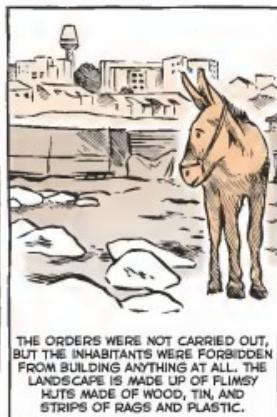
Near Jerusalem

ABU NUWAR IS THE LARGEST BEDOUIN COMMUNITY IN EAST JERUSALEM. MORE THAN 700 OF ITS INHABITANTS COME FROM 113 FAMILIES. THEY ARRIVED HERE IN 1967 AFTER THE SIX-DAY WAR. THROUGHOUT 1997-1998, AND AGAIN IN 2005, DEMOLITION ORDERS WERE ISSUED FOR EVERY BUILDING IN THE COMMUNITY.



ABU EMAD IBISAT IS THE SPOKESPERSON FOR THE COMMUNITY...

THE ISRAELI AUTHORITIES HAVE OFFERED TO RELOCATE US, SO THAT WE ABANDON THE AREA AND THEY CAN EXPAND THE COLONIAL SETTLEMENTS.



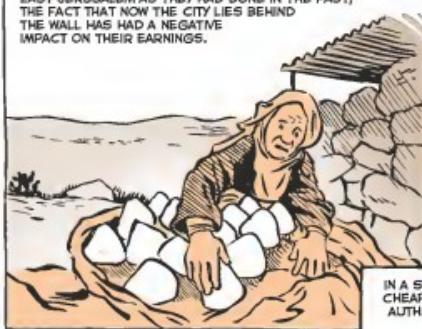
THE ORDERS WERE NOT CARRIED OUT, BUT THE INHABITANTS WERE FORBIDDEN FROM BUILDING ANYTHING AT ALL. THE LANDSCAPE IS MADE UP OF FLIMSY HUTS MADE OF WOOD, TIN, AND STRIPS OF RAGS AND PLASTIC.



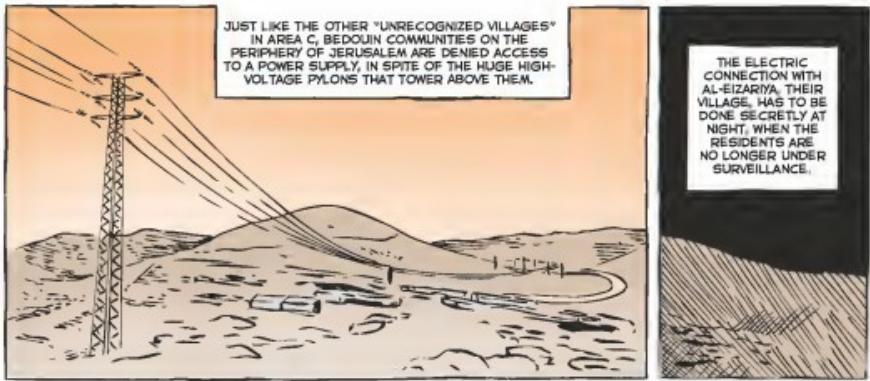
WE ARE DETERMINED TO KEEP RESISTING AND STAY ON THIS LAND. OUR GOATS AND SHEEP NEED OPEN SPACES AND THIS IS OUR WAY OF LIFE.



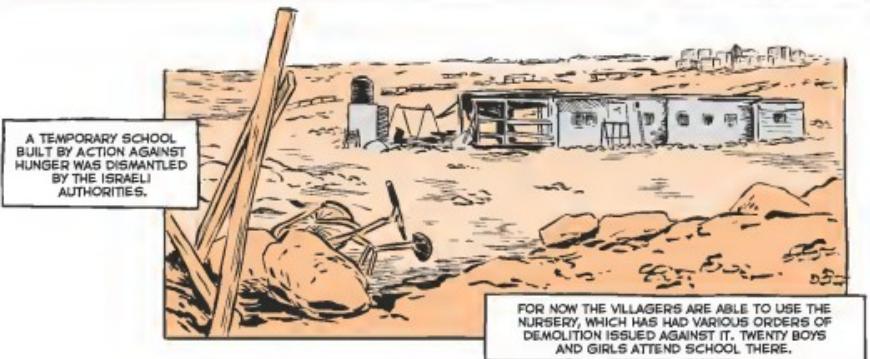
THE RESIDENTS MAKE DAIRY PRODUCTS FOR SALE AND BARTER. IN FACT, THEY CAN ONLY DISTRIBUTE THOSE PRODUCTS VIA PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND PRIVATE CARS TO ABU DIS AND AL-EIZARIYA. THEY CANNOT SELL IN EAST JERUSALEM AS THEY HAD DONE IN THE PAST; THE FACT THAT NOW THE CITY LIES BEHIND THE WALL HAS HAD A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THEIR EARNINGS.



IN A STRANGE PARADOX, MANY RESIDENTS HAD ORIGINALLY WORKED AS CHEAP LABOR IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF SETTLEMENTS. TODAY, ISRAELI AUTHORITIES NO LONGER APPROVE THE MAJORITY OF WORK PERMITS. THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE HAS REACHED 80%.



THE ELECTRIC CONNECTION WITH AL-EIZIRYA, THEIR VILLAGE, HAS TO BE DONE SECRETLY AT NIGHT, WHEN THE RESIDENTS ARE NO LONGER UNDER SURVEILLANCE.



JABAL AL-BABA IS ANOTHER POPULATION UNDER THREAT. OVER 300 PEOPLE FROM 56 FAMILIES SETTLED HERE AFTER THE 1948 WAR, WITH THE CONSENT OF THE LANDOWNERS—THE RESIDENTS OF AL-EIZARIYA.



KING HUSSEIN OF JORDAN GAVE SOME OF THIS LAND AS A GIFT TO POPE PAUL VI IN 1964 DURING THE POPE'S HISTORIC PILGRIMAGE...



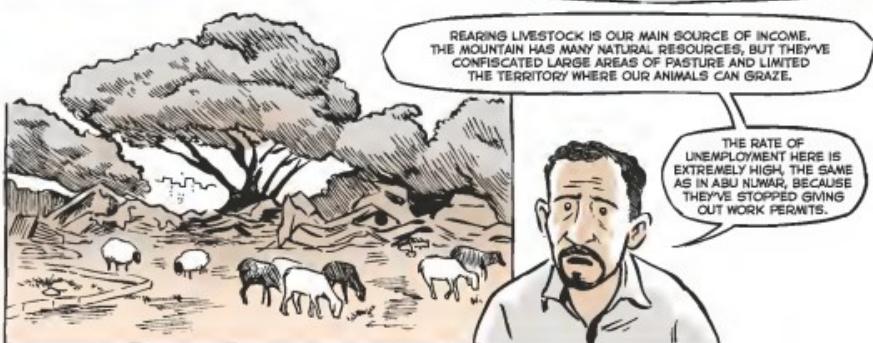
...SO JABAL AL-BABA, WHICH IN FACT MEANS "POPE'S MOUNTAIN," IS THE PROPERTY OF THE VATICAN.

WE SPOKE TO ATALLAH MAZARAA, THE COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE.

IN 1982, THEY CUT OUR ACCESS TO WATER FROM AL-EIZARIYA AND BUILT A WALL AROUND THE MOUNTAIN. THEY TRIED TO SHUT THE COMMUNITY OFF COMPLETELY, BUT WE MANAGED TO STOP THEM AND THEY LEFT US ONE SMALL ENTRANCE.



REARING LIVESTOCK IS OUR MAIN SOURCE OF INCOME. THE MOUNTAIN HAS MANY NATURAL RESOURCES, BUT THEY'VE CONFISCATED LARGE AREAS OF PASTURE AND LIMITED THE TERRITORY WHERE OUR ANIMALS CAN GRAZE.



IN SPITE OF THESE TOUGH CONDITIONS, THE COMMUNITY FIGHTS TO MAINTAIN THEIR TRADITIONAL LIFESTYLE AND STAY ON THE MOUNTAIN. THEY DON'T WANT THEIR CHILDREN TO BE LEFT WITH NOWHERE TO LIVE.



MAZARAA LIVES WITH HIS FAMILY IN A TEMPORARY HOUSE DONATED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION. IT TAKES A WEEK TO ASSEMBLE ONE OF THESE HOMES.



THE PANELS PROVIDE SUFFICIENT INSULATION FROM THE COLD.

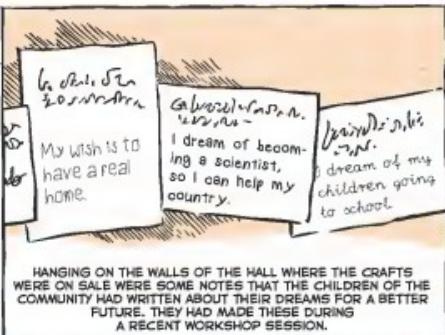
NEARBY WE SAW DEBRIS FROM THE LAST FEW DEMOLITIONS WHICH HAPPENED FOUR MONTHS AGO.



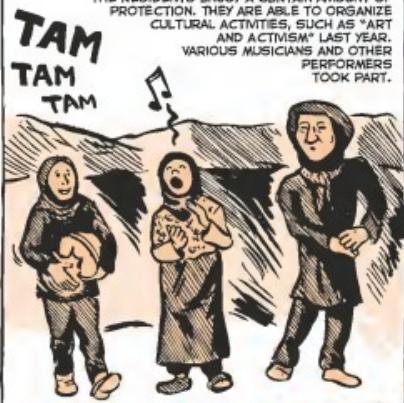
FOR YEARS, THE RESIDENTS HAVE BEEN LIVING UNDER THE CONSTANT THREAT OF DEMOLITION OF THEIR HOMES, THE RISK OF FORCIBLE TRANSFER AND THE PROHIBITION OF BUILDING PERMITS.



THE WOMEN DO NOT WORK OUTSIDE OF THE AREA, BUT THEIR HANDICRAFTS AND EMBROIDERY WORK ARE BEING PROMOTED. MANY CRAFTS ARE BASED ON THE WORKS OF NONE OTHER THAN BANKSY. THE ITEMS ARE SOLD TO TOURISTS AND DIPLOMATICS WHO COME TO VISIT AND HELP TO RAISE AWARENESS OF THE ISSUES.



SINCE THE LAND BELONGS TO THE VATICAN, THE RESIDENTS ENJOY A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF PROTECTION. THEY ARE ABLE TO ORGANIZE CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS "ART AND ACTIVISM" LAST YEAR. VARIOUS MUSICIANS AND OTHER PERFORMERS TOOK PART.

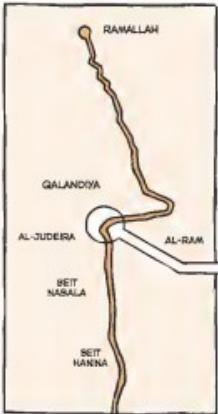


UNDER A MARQUEE, A GROUP OF YOUNG WOMEN WERE PREPARING TO MAKE A MURAL WITH TINY COLORED CARDBOARD SQUARES.



JOURNEY TO THE NORTH

From Ramallah to Nablus



THAT AFTERNOON WE WENT TO RAMALLAH, THE CLOSEST TOWN TO JERUSALEM, LYING 15 KILOMETERS TO THE NORTH. TO REACH IT YOU HAVE TO CROSS THE CHECKPOINT AT QALANDIYA, ONE OF THE BUSIEST AND MOST COMPLEX IN PALESTINE. IT'S THE SCENE OF MANY VIOLENT CLASHES.



DUE TO THE HUGE TRAFFIC JAMS, MANY PALESTINIANS TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SET UP STALLS NEARBY.



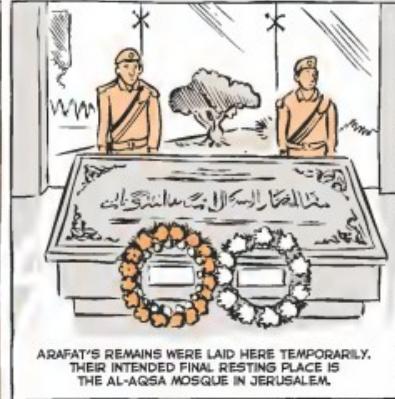
RAMALLAH IS THE ADMINISTRATIVE CAPITAL OF THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY, AND A LARGE NUMBER OF NGOs ARE BASED THERE. HUMANITARIAN WORKERS OF VARIOUS NATIONALITIES LIVE THERE TOO...



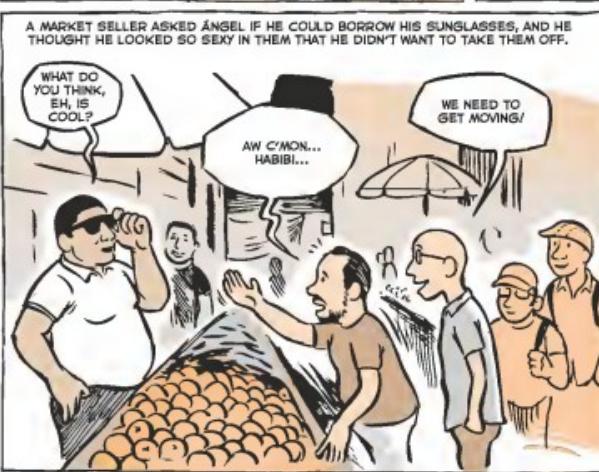
...AMONG THEM, MENDI AND ÁNGEL, TWO FRIENDS OF MAX. WE ARRANGED TO MEET UP SO THEY COULD SHOW US THE CITY'S ATTRACTIONS.

AT THE MUQATA'A, HEADQUARTERS FOR THE PALESTINIAN NATIONAL AUTHORITY, STANDS THE MAUSOLEUM OF YASER ARAFAT. WE HAD A SLIGHT PROBLEM GETTING ADMITTED, THOUGH...

SORRY, IF YOU'RE NOT FOR BARCA YOU CAN'T COME IN!



A MARKET SELLER ASKED ÁNGEL IF HE COULD BORROW HIS SUNGLASSES, AND HE THOUGHT HE LOOKED SO SEXY IN THEM THAT HE DIDN'T WANT TO TAKE THEM OFF.



HEY MENDI, IS THERE SOMEWHERE NEAR HERE WHERE WE CAN HAVE SOME FRUIT JUICE AND SMOKE A HOOKAH PIPE?

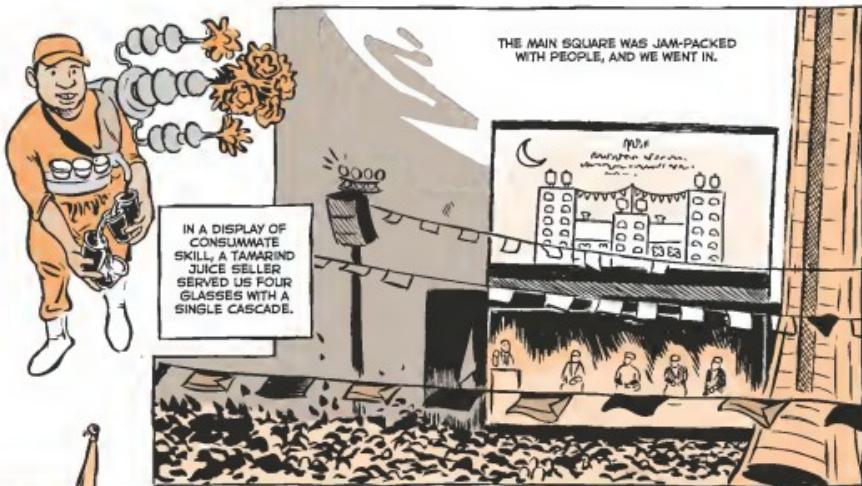


WHILE THEY CHATTED WITH A LOCAL I TRIED MY VERY FIRST HOOKAH "FRUIT PIPE," WITH THE FRESH AROMA OF FRUIT UNDER CHARCOAL.

ARAB COUNTRIES ARE UNITED BY A COMMON LANGUAGE AND THE SAME CULTURAL LEGACY AND IDENTITY...



* ON DISCOVERING THAT WE WERE SPANISH, PEOPLE TENDED TO ASK WHICH TEAM WE SUPPORTED... AND WANTED TO KNOW WHICH WAS BEST, MADRID OR BARÇA?



THE NEXT DAY WE WENT TO NABLUS.
IT IS THE COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL
AND AGRICULTURAL HEART OF
THE NORTHERN WEST BANK.



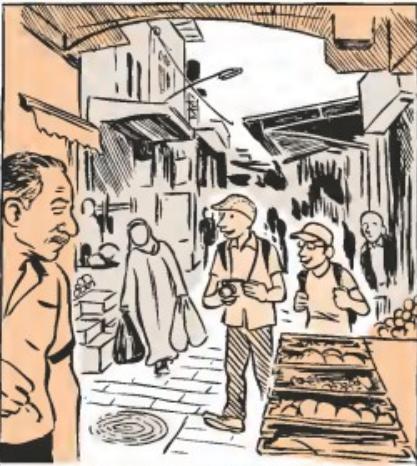
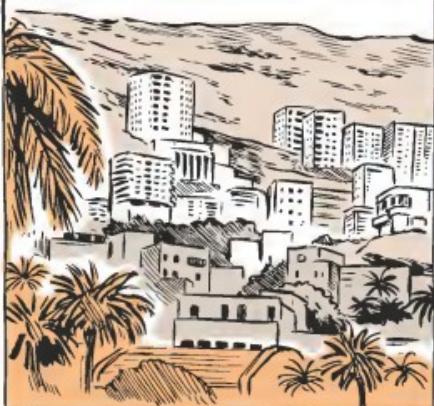
THE CHAUFFEUR FANCIED HIMSELF AS QUITE THE FORMULA 1 DRIVER. THE OTHER PASSENGERS WERE CLEARLY USED TO HIS BREAKNECK SPEEDS.



ON THE WAY, WE SAW AN ACCIDENT INVOLVING A CAR AND A MINIBUS IDENTICAL TO OURS... LUCKILY THERE WERE NO CASUALTIES.



WHAT WAS MOST ASTONISHING ABOUT NABLUS WAS THE VALLEY THAT OVERLOOKED IT, CRAMMED WITH TALL BUILDINGS FROM SIDE TO SIDE.



WE SOAKED IN THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE CITY, EXPLORING THE LITTLE MARKET STREETS WHICH WERE LIVELY WITH CROWDS OF PEOPLE.

THE SHOP ASSISTANTS WERE GREAT! AS WE NOSED AROUND, THEY INVITED US TO TRY THEIR PRODUCTS FOR FREE.



AND THEY READILY AGREED TO LET US INTO THEIR ESTABLISHMENTS SO THAT WE COULD SEE HOW THEY WORKED BEHIND THE SCENES.

MOST OF THESE WERE FAMILY BUSINESSES WITH LONG-STANDING TRADITIONS. I WAS FASCINATED BY THE BLACK AND WHITE PICTURE OF A RATHER STERN-LOOKING MUSTACHIOED GENTLEMAN ON A SHOP SIGN, AND WANTED TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HIM.



AND SO WE MET HIS GREAT-GRANDSON AND GREAT-GREAT-GRANDSON. THE IMAGE OF THAT ACCOMPLISHED PALESTINIAN BUSINESSMAN WAS PROUDLY EMBLAZONED ON SCORES OF DIFFERENT PRODUCTS.



AS WE MUNCHIED ON SUGARY CREPES, A VERY CHEERFUL LITTLE 10-YEAR-OLD BOY CALLED ABUL CAME UP TO US...



SO YOU'RE SPANISH? DO YOU KNOW CRISTIANO RONALDO?



ON OUR OUTINGS WE'D SEE INCREDIBLE PHOTOGRAPHIC MONTAGES PRINTED ON POSTERS OR HUGE STRETCHES OF CANVAS. WE GUessed THAT THESE WERE IMAGES OF PEOPLE CONSIDERED AS MARTYRS.



NABLUS PRODUCES ITS OWN "NABLUS" SOAP, MADE WITH OLIVE OIL, WATER AND SODIUM. ONE OF THE OLDEST INDUSTRIES IN THE WORLD, THE ORIGINS OF THIS PARTICULAR SOAP GO BACK AS FAR AS THE 10TH CENTURY.



I BOUGHT A BAR OF STRAWBERRY SCENTED SOAP. IT LASTED A GOOD FEW MONTHS!



AFTER HOURS OF WALKING, WE NEEDED A BIT OF CHILL-OUT TIME AND WE ENDED UP IN HANHAM AL-SAMMARA BATHHOUSE. A BATH AND A "RELAXING" MASSAGE LEFT US FEELING AS NEW AGAIN.

LOST IN THE MAZE-LIKE ALLEYS OF THE OLD QUARTER, WE CAME ACROSS PAINTINGS SYMBOLIZING PALESTINE RESISTANCE.



HANDALA IS ONE OF THE MOST DEFINITIVE ICONS, PRESENT IN MANY STREETS THROUGHOUT THE OCCUPIED TERRITORY. HE WAS CREATED IN 1969 BY A REFUGEE CARTOONIST TO EMBODY THE ABSOLUTE DISPOSSESSION HE WAS EXPERIENCING. HANDALA REPRESENTED THE IDEA THAT HE COULD NOT GROW UP OR TURN AROUND UNTIL HE COULD RETURN TO HIS HOMELAND. IT WAS NEVER TO BE.



THE KEY OF RETURN IS ANOTHER OF THE GREATEST SYMBOLS FOR PALESTINIANS. MANY REFUGEES STILL KEEP THE KEYS FROM THE HOUSES THAT THEY HAD TO LEAVE NEARLY 70 YEARS AGO, ALWAYS IN THE HOPE THAT THEY WILL ONE DAY RETURN.



AFTERWARDS WE SMOKED A HOOKAH AND OFFERED RUNNING COMMENTARY ON THE SOAP OPERA WHICH WAS SHOWING ON THE TV AT THE HAMMAM.



GAZA

A territory under blockade

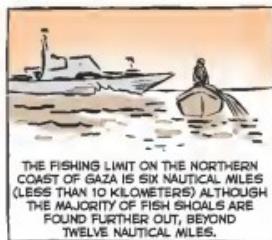
THE NEXT DAY WE MADE OUR WAY TO THE GAZA STRIP.



LITTLE DID WE GUESS, AS WE CONTEMPLATED THE IDYLLIC LANDSCAPE AROUND THE YAD MORDECHAI KIBBUTZ, THAT ONE OF THE MOST DISTURBING PLACES IN THE WORLD WAS JUST THREE KILOMETERS AWAY.



THE GAZA STRIP HAS ONE OF THE HIGHEST CONCENTRATIONS OF POPULATION IN THE WORLD: 1,900,000 PEOPLE LIVE ON A TERRITORY 365 SQUARE KILOMETERS IN SIZE. GAZANS HAVE SUFFERED A BLOCKADE FOR NEARLY 10 YEARS AND GONE THROUGH THREE MAJOR WARS SINCE 2008, THE MOST RECENT ONE IN 2014.

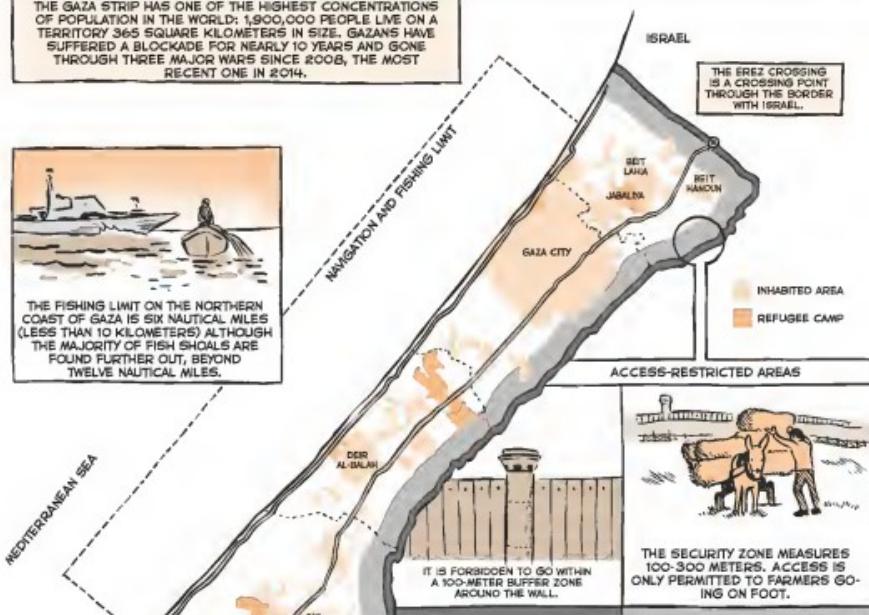


THE FISHING LIMIT ON THE NORTHERN COAST OF GAZA IS SIX NAUTICAL MILES (LESS THAN 10 KILOWMETERS) ALTHOUGH THE MAJORITY OF FISH SHOALS ARE FOUND FURTHER OUT, BEYOND TWELVE NAUTICAL MILES.

NAVIGATION AND FISHING LIMIT

ISRAEL

THE Erez Crossing is a crossing point through the border with Israel.



THE SECURITY ZONE MEASURES 100-300 METERS. ACCESS IS ONLY PERMITTED TO FARMERS GOING ON FOOT.

THE BLOCKADE IMPOSED ON THE GAZA STRIP HAS LED PALESTINIANS TO DIG VARIOUS TUNNELS. MANY OF THESE TUNNELS WERE FLOODED BY EGYPT, AND OTHERS WERE CLOSED BY ISRAEL.

EGYPT

THE RAFAH BORDER CROSSING POINT THROUGH THE BORDER WITH EGYPT.

ESSENTIAL ITEMS WERE SMUGGLED THROUGH THESE TUNNELS: LIVESTOCK, FOOD, MEDICINE, CLOTHES, FUEL... BUT WEAPONS TOO, AND EVEN LIONS!



THE HUGE TERMINAL-STYLE BUILDING ON THE EREZ BORDER WAS BUILT IN 2007 AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE WALL. IT IS REMINISCENT OF AN AIRPORT, ALTHOUGH I SENSED IT WAS NOT QUITE THE SAME THING....

BY SEPTEMBER 2000, JUST BEFORE THE SECOND INTIFADA, 26,000 PALESTINIAN WORKERS WERE TRAVELING DAILY THROUGH EREZ.



IN 2015, THE AVERAGE DAILY FOOTFALL WAS 475, 1.83% OF THAT OF 15 YEARS BEFORE.



KASIA, HEAD OF BASE IN GAZA, ACCOMPANIED US ON THIS TRIP.



INSIDE, WE FOUND THAT THE CONTROL BOOTHS WERE EMPTY. IT SEEMED THERE WASN'T A SINGLE SOUL TO BE SEEN IN THAT HUGE DESERTED SPACE....

BUT WE WERE NOT ALONE. SOMEONE WAS OBSERVING US FROM AN UPSTAIRS WINDOW...

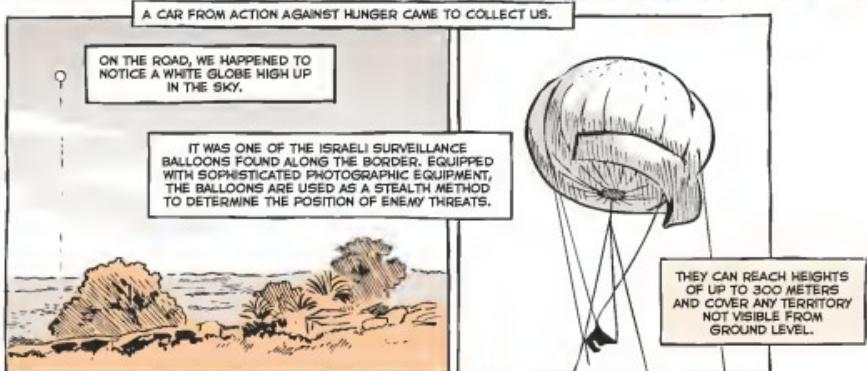


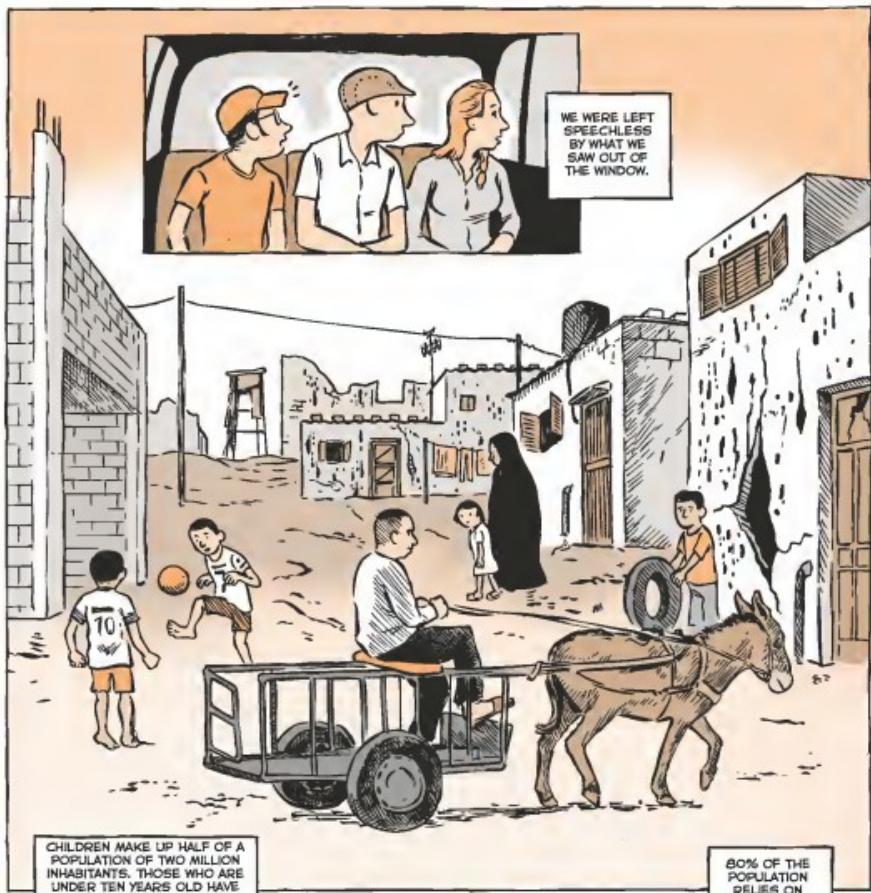
FIRST YOU HAVE TO PASS THROUGH A STRICT ISRAELI CONTROL, WHERE YOU ARE QUESTIONED ON THE MOTIVE FOR YOUR VISIT, THE LENGTH OF YOUR STAY OR ANYTHING PERSONAL. I WAS ANXIOUS NOT TO PUT MY FOOT IN IT; THE LANGUAGE BARRIER WAS ENOUGH OF A PROBLEM.

WHAT'S YOUR PROFESSION? WHAT...? DOES SHE MEAN WHAT'S MY POSITION?



ONCE WE WERE FREE OF THE TERRITORY WE HAD TO WALK ALONG A WIRED CORRIDOR NEARLY TWO KILOMETERS LONG.





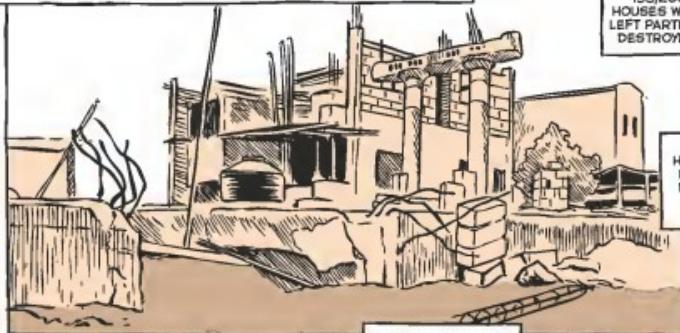
CHILDREN MAKE UP HALF OF A POPULATION OF TWO MILLION INHABITANTS. THOSE WHO ARE UNDER TEN YEARS OLD HAVE SPENT THEIR ENTIRE LIVES LIVING UNDER THE BLOCKADE.

80% OF THE POPULATION RELIES ON HUMANITARIAN AID IN ORDER TO SURVIVE.



OF THE 500,000 PEOPLE WHO WERE DISPLACED DURING THE 2014 CONFLICT, AROUND 100,000 SUFFERED DAMAGE TO THEIR HOMES, AND 35,000 REMAIN HOMELESS TODAY.

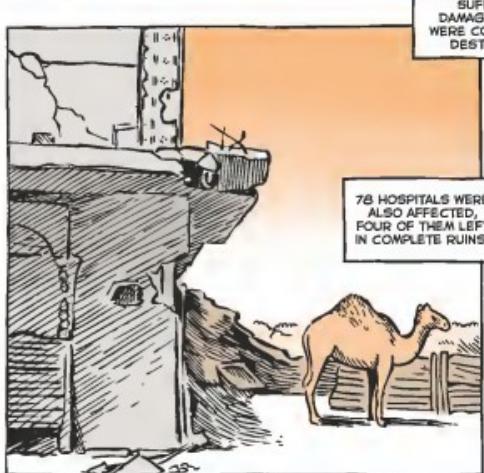
153,200 HOUSES WERE LEFT PARTIALLY DESTROYED.



OF THE 11,000 HOUSES THAT WERE LEFT COMPLETELY DESTROYED, JUST 12% HAVE BEEN REBUILT.

252 SCHOOLS SUFFERED DAMAGE. SEVEN WERE COMPLETELY DESTROYED.

78 HOSPITALS WERE ALSO AFFECTED, FOUR OF THEM LEFT IN COMPLETE RUINS.



DURING THE 51 DAYS OF THE WAR, THERE WERE 2,251 PALESTINIAN CASUALTIES: 735 OF THE DEAD BELONGED TO ARMED GROUPS, 1,460 WERE CIVILIAN, AND 56 WERE UNCONFIRMED. THERE WERE 11,230 INJURED, 900 OF THOSE LEFT PERMANENTLY DISABLED.

566 OF THE VICTIMS WERE CHILDREN AND 299 WERE WOMEN.



ON THE ISRAELI SIDE, THERE WERE A TOTAL OF 72 DEATHS: 66 WERE MILITARY CASUALTIES AND SIX WERE CIVILIAN.

WE WENT TO ALSAWARHA IN THE CENTRAL AREA OF THE STRIP, TO SEE A PROJECT BEING IMPLEMENTED FOR WOMEN OF THIS RURAL AREA...



THE GOAL OF THE PROJECT WAS TO ENSURE WOMEN'S RIGHT TO WORK, AND TO PROMOTE THE VALUE OF THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THEIR LOCAL ECONOMY. IN THIS WAY WOMEN ARE ABLE TO ENGAGE IN SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS.



THE PROJECT, WHICH WAS LAUNCHED ON AUGUST 1ST, 2015, AIDS TO HELP PROTECT, GUARANTEE AND EXERCISE THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN ORDER TO REFORM THE EXISTING STRUCTURES THAT HAVE BEEN PERPETUATING GENDER INEQUALITY.

WOMEN IN THE AREA REPRESENT JUST 19% OF THE WORKFORCE.



FATMA IS THE PROJECT COORDINATOR.

THIS ACTIVITY ENRICHES BOTH THE ECONOMY AND LIFE AT A PERSONAL LEVEL: ENJOYING THE SENSE OF SOCIAL RECOGNITION THAT COMES WITH WORK; SHARING A COMMON SPACE WITH OTHER WOMEN; FEELING USEFUL...

WE HELP TO INCREASE THEIR CLIENT BASE AND WE TEACH THEM TO UPHOLD THEIR RIGHTS WHEN DEALING WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

SOME OF THE WOMEN ARE SYRIAN REFUGEE WIDOWS, AND THEY ARE PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE.



WE MET OMAR, A NURSE BASED IN THE AREA WORKING TO HELP CHILDREN.

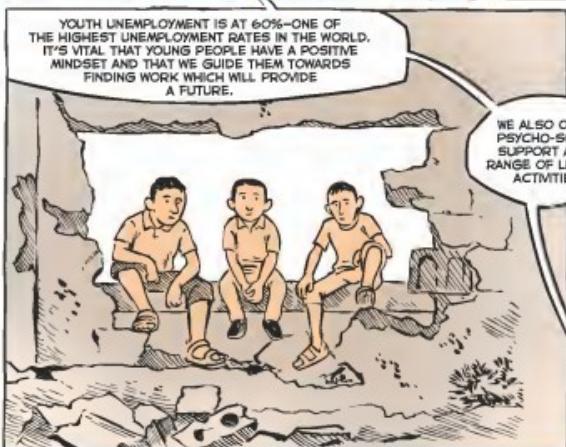
WE'RE CARRYING OUT HEMOGLOBIN TESTS ON CHILDREN WHO ARE BETWEEN 5 AND 11, TO DETECT ANEMIA.

THE CHILDREN NEED VITAMINS AND IRON AND WE GIVE THEM A SUPPLEMENT TO REPLACE THE NUTRIENTS THEY'VE LOST.



YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IS AT 60%-ONE OF THE HIGHEST UNEMPLOYMENT RATES IN THE WORLD. IT'S VITAL THAT YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE A POSITIVE MINDSET AND THAT WE GUIDE THEM TOWARDS FINDING WORK WHICH WILL PROVIDE A FUTURE.

WE ALSO OFFER PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT AND A RANGE OF LEISURE ACTIVITIES.



THERE IS A LOT OF TALENT AROUND HERE. LOOK AT THE PIECE THAT ONE OF MY KIDS EMBROIDERED YESTERDAY!

THE HEADQUARTERS AND GUEST HOUSE FOR ACTION AGAINST HUNGER WERE IN THE CITY OF GAZA, ON A FLOOR IN A PLACE CALLED THE DREAM BUILDING.



THE OWNER OF THE BLOCK WAS A REAL ANIMAL LOVER, AND HIS PORCH WALLS WERE LINED WITH DOZENS OF CAGES OF EXOTIC BIRDS AND AQUARIUMS.



HE WAS ALSO A VERY KEEN COLLECTOR OF ANTIQUES AND KITSCH, ALL OF IT EXHIBITED IN THE HALL. IT WAS ASSEMBLED IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER OR HARMONY, TAKING UP PRACTICALLY ALL THE SPACE.



IN OUR LIVING ROOM WE FOUND A GENERATOR—AN INDISPENSABLE PIECE OF EQUIPMENT IN GAZA IN ORDER TO COPE WITH THE FREQUENT POWER BLACKOUTS, SOME LASTING SEVERAL HOURS DAILY.



WE WERE WARNED THAT TAP WATER WAS NOT DRINKABLE AND THAT IT SHOULD ONLY BE USED TO WASH.



STOCKED IN THE KITCHEN LARDER WERE PROVISIONS FOR A WHOLE MONTH.

AND IN ANOTHER CUPBOARD, I FOUND SOME MYSTERIOUS BAGS...

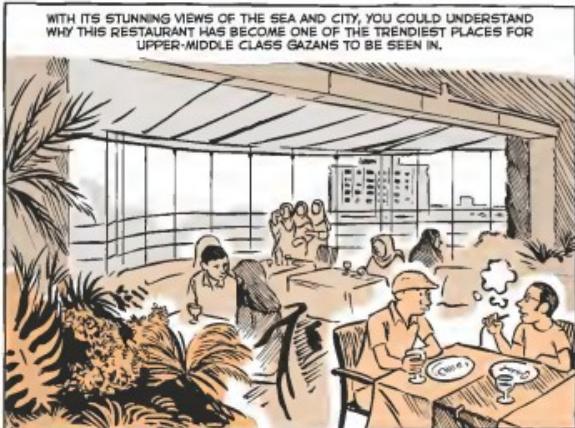


IT WAS A STORE OF HELMETS AND BULLETPROOF VESTS.





LEVEL UP RESTAURANT, ON THE TERRACE OF ZAFER TOWER, WAS RIGHT IN THE CENTER OF GAZA.



IT WAS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT SUCH BEAUTIFUL SIGHTS COULD EXIST SIDE BY SIDE WITH THE DESOLATE CONDITIONS WE'D WITNESSED A FEW SHORT HOURS BEFORE... AND WE COULD ONLY IMAGINE HOW MAGNIFICENT ALL OF GAZA WOULD BE IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE BLOCKADE.



FIVE A.M.
IN THE
DREAM
BUILDING...



AN ETERNITY LATER...



AFTER A SHOWER I'D NEVER FEEL EXACTLY SQUEAKY CLEAN, BECAUSE OF THE HIGH SALINITY AND CONTAMINATION IN THE WATER...



MY SKIN FELT STICKY AS IF I'D TAKEN A DIP IN THE SEA.



WE HAD AGREED TO MEET THAT MORNING WITH SAMER, A HYGIENE PROMOTER, TO VISIT THE WATER PROJECTS.

SOME NIGHT, HUH? WHAT WITH THE MUZZIN SINGING AND THE ROAD WORK OUTSIDE I HAVEN'T SLEPT A WINK.

ME NEITHER... BEST OF ALL, THE NOISE STOPPED AS SOON AS I GOT IN THE SHOWER. THEY MUST HAVE BEEN MAKING THE MOST OF THE COOLER HOURS OF THE DAY, NO POINT OTHERWISE...



BY THE WAY... YOU HAD A GOOD BREAKFAST, RIGHT? BECAUSE WE'RE OUT FOR THE WHOLE DAY...

NAH, JUST HAD A BISCUIT IN A HURRY. I'LL NIBBLE SOMETHING ON THE WAY.

OH NO, I FORGOT!!



GOOD LUCK WITH THAT... TODAY IS THE FIRST DAY OF RAMADAN AND THEY PROBABLY WON'T BE SERVING FOOD ANYWHERE. EATING IN PUBLIC IS HIGHLY FROWNS UPON, IT'S CONSIDERED OFFENSIVE TO MUSLIMS.



WE WENT TO KHAN YUNIS ON THE COASTAL ROAD.

WHAT ON EARTH IS THAT HORRIBLE SWELL?

DON'T LOOK AT ME, I WASN'T RESPONSIBLE!



IN GAZA, ACCESS TO WATER IS A MORE URGENT PROBLEM THAN IN THE WEST BANK, BECAUSE THE LEVEL OF SALINATION RENDERS THE AQUIFER UNUSABLE. BLACK PLASTIC STORAGE TANKS ARE VITALLY IMPORTANT TO PROVIDE WATER. GAZANS HAVE TO BUY THEM FROM PRIVATE SELLERS.



WATER IS A HUGE EXPENDITURE FOR HOMES; FOR MANY, THE COST EATS INTO ONE THIRD OF THE FAMILY BUDGET.

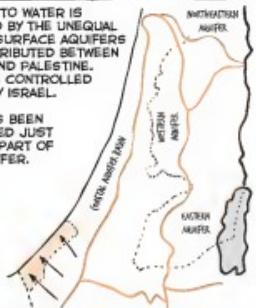
THE PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY CAN BE USED TO WASH WITH, BUT IT IS NOT FIT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION BECAUSE OF ITS HIGH LEVELS OF SALINITY AND CONTAMINATION.



THE Elevated QUANTITIES OF NITRATE AND SALT CAN HAVE SERIOUS REPERCUSSIONS ON HEALTH.

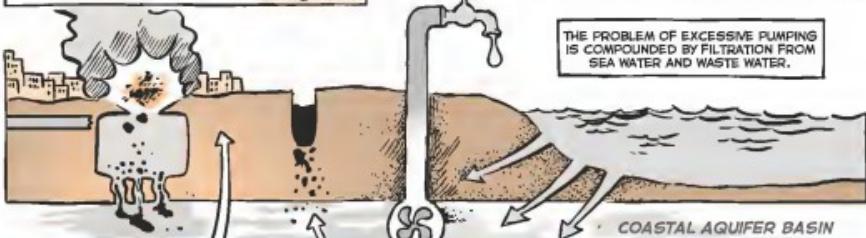
ACCESS TO WATER IS dictated BY THE UNEQUAL WAY SUBSURFACE AQUIFERS ARE DISTRIBUTED BETWEEN ISRAEL AND PALESTINE. THEY ARE CONTROLLED MAINLY BY ISRAEL.

GAZA HAS BEEN ALLOCATED JUST A SMALL PART OF THE AQUIFER.



AS A CONSEQUENCE, GAZANS HAVE BEEN EXTRACTING MORE WATER THAN CAN BE REPLENISHED.

THE PROBLEM OF EXCESSIVE PUMPING IS COMPOUNDED BY FILTRATION FROM SEA WATER AND WASTE WATER.



THE WAR WRECKED HAVOC ON THE WATER INFRASTRUCTURE AT AN ESTIMATED COST OF \$34 MILLION (AROUND £27.5 MILLION).

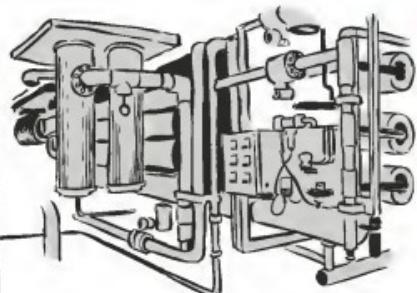


60% OF THE POPULATION HAS NO ACCESS TO A SEWERAGE SYSTEM. THEY USE CESSPITS TO THROW AWAY WASTE WATER AND RAW SEWAGE. THIS CONTAMINATION ALSO EVENTUALLY FILTERS THROUGH TO THE AQUIFER.



CESSPITS ARE SOURCES OF DISEASE, MALARIA, MUD, SMELLS AND MOSQUITOES. THERE ARE MILLIONS OF PITS IN GAZA. EVERY MONTH THEY OVERFLOW AND DEEGLUDGING TRUCKS ARE CALLED IN TO EMPTY THEM.

THERE ARE CURRENTLY JUST THREE OPERATIONAL SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANTS IN GAZA. THE EQUIPMENT IS OBSOLETE AND WORKS INEFFICIENTLY BECAUSE OF THE POWER CUTS.

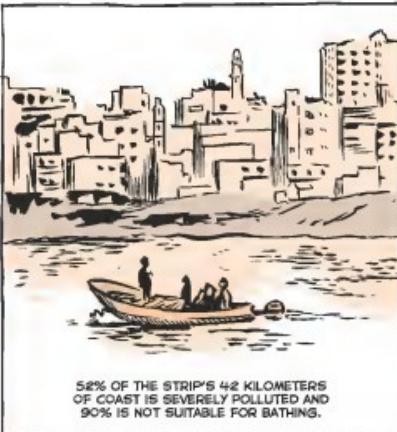


THE BLOCKADE RESTRICTS IMPORTS OF VITAL MATERIALS SUCH AS GENERATORS, FUEL, AND CHEMICAL PRODUCTS, AND LIMITS ENTRY INTO GAZA BY EXPERTS WHO COULD PROVIDE A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM.



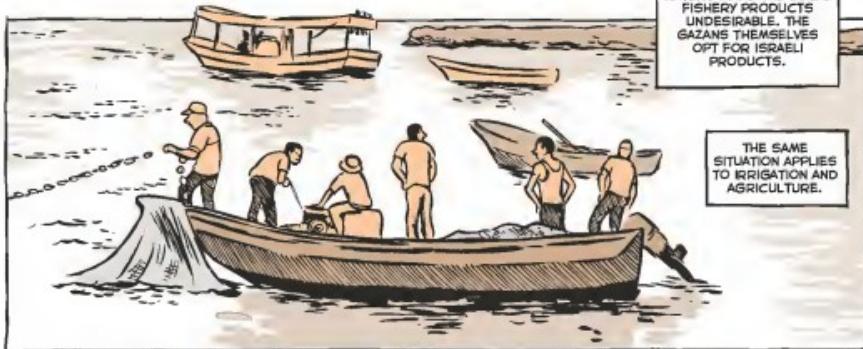
RESTRICTIONS ON THE INSTALLATION OF SOLAR PANELS LIMIT THE USE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY THAT COULD BE USED TO PROCESS WASTE WATER.

AS A CONSEQUENCE OF AN INADEQUATE SEWERAGE SYSTEM AND LACK OF FUEL FOR EQUIPMENT, 100,000 CUBIC METERS OF PARTIALLY TREATED WATER FLOW INTO THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA EVERY DAY. GRADUALLY THE SMELL BECOMES INTOLERABLE.



52% OF THE STRIP'S 42 KILOMETERS OF COAST IS SEVERELY POLLUTED AND 90% IS NOT SUITABLE FOR BATHING.

THIS HAS A VERY SERIOUS IMPACT ON THE FISHING INDUSTRY. OVER HALF OF THE 4,000 FISHERMEN IN GAZA LIVE BELOW THE POVERTY LINE, BECAUSE MARINE LIFE CANNOT SURVIVE IN SUCH A POLLUTED ENVIRONMENT.



THE CONTAMINATED WATERS MAKE THE LOCAL FISHERY PRODUCTS UNDESIRABLE. THE GAZANS THEMSELVES OPT FOR ISRAELI PRODUCTS.

THE SAME SITUATION APPLIES TO IRRIGATION AND AGRICULTURE.

* THERE IS, APPARENTLY, ONLY ONE FISHERWOMAN IN GAZA.

AROUND 70% OF RAINWATER IS LOST DOWN THE DRAIN. THE LACK OF ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR HARVESTING RAINWATER IS CONTRIBUTING TO ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION.



THE REMAINING WATER TRIGGERS FLOODS IN WHICH CLEAN WATER MIXES WITH OVERFLOWING SEWAGE.

SAMER SHOWED US SEVERAL JOINT INITIATIVES BEING UNDERTAKEN WITH THE COASTAL MUNICIPALITIES WATER UTILITY (CMWU) AND THE PALESTINIAN WATER AUTHORITY (PWA). THESE ENTITIES PROVIDE PUBLIC SERVICES, SANITATION AND HYGIENE, AND THEY ARE IN CHARGE OF TECHNICAL DESIGN AND COORDINATION WITH NGOS.



SECTIONS OF NEW SEWERAGE PIPEWORK ARE BEING INSTALLED, AS WELL AS SEWER CONNECTIONS TO HOMES IN AREAS THAT HAVE BEEN USING CESSPITS, SUCH AS GAZA AND KHAN YUNIS.

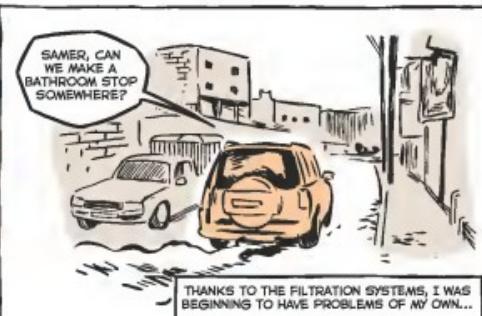
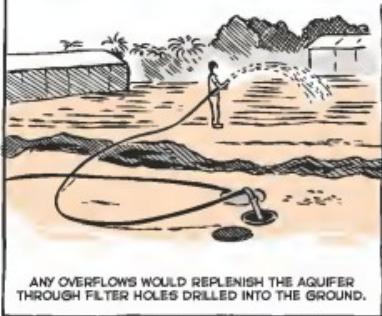
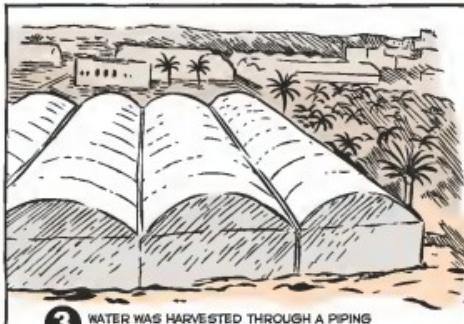
FINALLY, SAMER TOOK US TO VARIOUS PUMPING STATIONS AND DESALINATION PLANTS IN KHAN YUNIS...

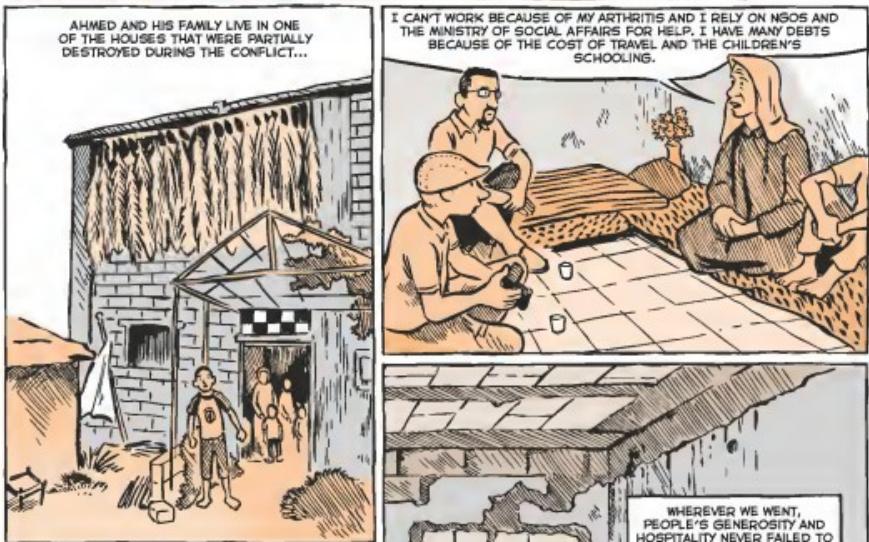
THIS IS THE DEEPEST POINT IN THE VALLEY. 1200 FAMILIES ARE NOW ENJOYING THE BENEFITS OF A NEW PUMPING SYSTEM WHICH WAS INSTALLED TO PREVENT WATER STAGNATION.





THREE RAINWATER HARVESTING METHODS HAVE BEEN PILOTED SUCCESSFULLY. THEY WILL REDUCE THE RISK OF FLOODING AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF SUBSURFACE WATER.





HAMOUD'S HOME WAS COMPLETELY DESTROYED BY THE BOMBINGS. THE FAMILY WAS FORCED TO MOVE TO THIS EMPTY PATCH OF GROUND AFTER THE WAR.



HIS WIFE GREETED US, AND THE CHILDREN GRADUALLY VENTURED OUT.

MY HUSBAND HAS BEEN OUT OF WORK FOR SEVERAL MONTHS AND WE HAVE NO RESOURCES LEFT. WE RELY ON CHARITY.



I WONDERED WHERE HAMOUD WAS; HIS WIFE SAID THAT HE HAD GONE TO THE MARKET TO GATHER LEFTOVER FOOD THAT HADN'T BEEN SOLD.



WE ASKED FOR PERMISSION TO ENTER THEIR HOME AND SAW THE PARTITIONED ROOM WHICH SERVED BOTH AS LIVING ROOM AND BEDROOM IN TURN.



JUST LIKE SO MANY OTHER FAMILIES, THEY DON'T HAVE A KITCHEN OR BATHROOM—JUST A WATER TANK. THEY WASH IN THIS CORNER WITHOUT ANY PRIVACY.



WE RETURNED TO GAZA CITY, THROUGH THE PORT. FOR 3,000 YEARS, THIS WAS THE GATEWAY BETWEEN AFRICA AND ASIA. EXPORTS OF PERFUME, TEXTILES, GRAINS AND SPICES FLOWED FROM HERE.



TODAY, THE PORT IS TOO SMALL TO ACCOMMODATE BIG CONTAINER SHIPS AND IT IS MAINLY USED BY FISHERMEN.



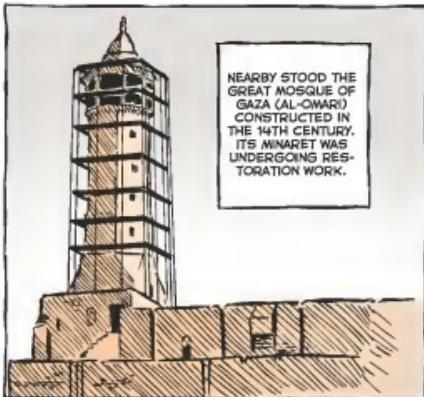
THE CONSTRUCTION OF A MAIN PORT IN GAZA IS ONE OF PALESTINE'S MOST PRESSING REQUIREMENTS. IT WOULD HELP TO END THE STATE OF ISOLATION AND MITIGATE THE ECONOMIC TROUBLES SUFFERED IN GAZA.



WE STROLLED THROUGH AL-ZAWIYA MARKET, RIGHT IN THE HEART OF THE CAPITAL, TO SEE HOW GAZANS PREPARED FOR EID AL-FITR—THE END OF RAMADAN.



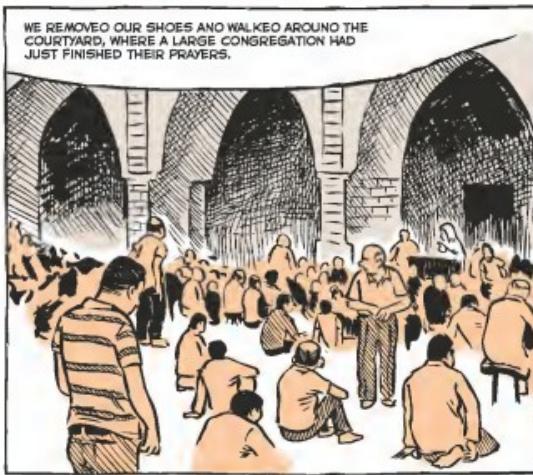
FAWANEES (RAMADAN LANTERNS) WERE HANGING FROM THE STALL AWNINGS.



NEARBY STOOD THE GREAT MOSQUE OF GAZA (AL-OMAR). CONSTRUCTED IN THE 14TH CENTURY, ITS MINARET WAS UNDERGOING RESTORATION WORK.



DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR THE MOSQUE WAS BOMBARED BY THE BRITISH, WHO WERE ATTACKING OTTOMAN POSITIONS IN GAZA. THE SUPREME MUSLIM COUNCIL COMPLETED RESTORATION OF THE MOSQUE IN 1927.



FOR MANY IN GAZA, THE MOSQUE SERVES AS A SOURCE OF EMOTIONAL AND PRACTICAL SUPPORT.



ON THE WAY BACK TO THE CAR WE STOPPED OFF AT A CONFECTIONERY SHOP. TWO TEENAGERS WORKED NONSTOP TO PROVIDE SWEETS FOR FAMILIES' CELEBRATIONS THAT NIGHT.



THAT AFTERNOON WE WENT FOR REFRESHMENTS WITH KASIA AT THE AL-DEIRA HOTEL, WHICH HAD A HUGE TERRACE OVERLOOKING THE BEACH. FEELING ADVENTUROUS, WE WENT WITH THE RECOMMENDATIONS...



OVER THE LAST FEW DAYS I'D BEEN TRYING THE KIND OF SWEETS YOU COULDN'T DREAM UP, BUT THIS PARTICULAR CONCOCTION OPENED THE DOORS OF PERCEPTION TO A SUGAR-RUSH THAT TOOK THINGS TO A NEW LEVEL...



THEN WE WENT TO A BAKERY AND A SUPERMARKET TO STOCK UP ON PROVISIONS FOR OUR "BUNKER."



WE BOUGHT A LOCAL CHEESE WHICH WAS EXTREMELY SALTY AND AS HARD AS A BRICK. A SAW WOULD HAVE COME IN HANDY TO CUT IT...



AFTER DINNER, I TOOK A MOMENT TO COPY OUT MY FIELD NOTES.

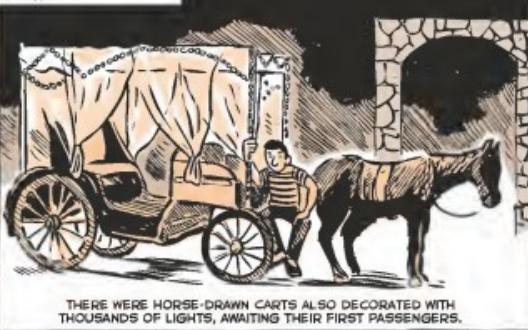


LATER ON, SAMER SHOWED US A TASTE OF STREET LIFE DURING RAMADAN. MARQUEES HAD BEEN PUT UP ON THE PORT, FESTOONED WITH HUNDREDS OF LIGHTS. BUT IT WAS EARLY AND NO ONE HAD SHOWED UP.



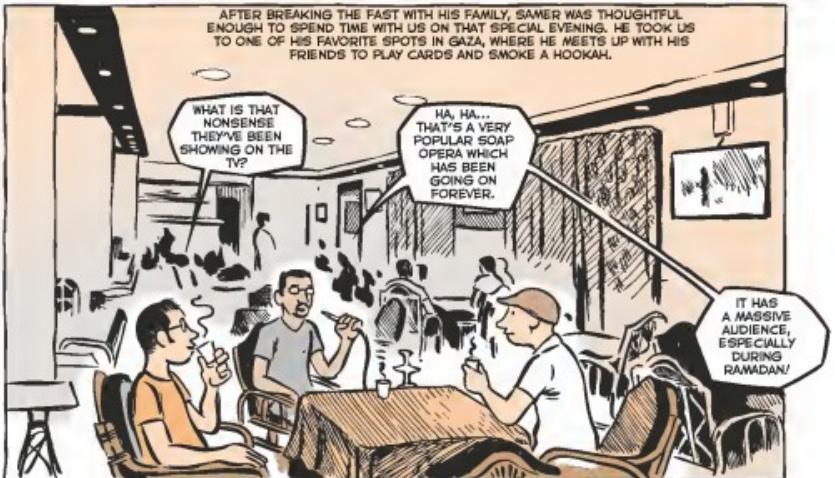
CHILDREN PLAYED IN THE STREET, SWINGING FLAMING SPONGES TIED ONTO STRINGS.

THERE WAS A PARK. ITS LIGHTS HAD BEEN SWITCHED OFF AND THE ONLY ILLUMINATION CAME FROM CHILDREN'S MINIATURE CARS, SPILLING HELLISH MUSIC FROM THEIR TINY LOUDSPEAKERS.



THERE WERE HORSE-DRAWN CARTS ALSO DECORATED WITH THOUSANDS OF LIGHTS, AWAITING THEIR FIRST PASSENGERS.

AFTER BREAKING THE FAST WITH HIS FAMILY, SAMER WAS THOUGHTFUL ENOUGH TO SPEND TIME WITH US ON THAT SPECIAL EVENING. HE TOOK US TO ONE OF HIS FAVORITE SPOTS IN GAZA, WHERE HE MEETS UP WITH HIS FRIENDS TO PLAY CARDS AND SMOKE A HOOKAH.



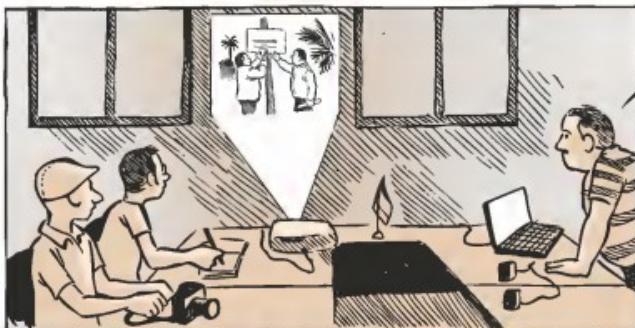
WHAT IS THAT NONSENSE THEY'VE BEEN SHOWING ON THE TV?

HA, HA... THAT'S A VERY POPULAR SOAP OPERA WHICH HAS BEEN GOING ON FOREVER.

IT HAS A MASSIVE AUDIENCE, ESPECIALLY DURING RAMADAN!

NEXT MORNING, WE VISITED THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE OLDEST AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE IN OCCUPIED PALESTINE. IT WAS FOUNDED IN 1944 AND TODAY COMPRISSES 900 MEMBERS.

THIS COOPERATIVE WAS FOUNDED ON THE PRINCIPLE OF SERVING FARMERS AND BOOSTING COOPERATIVE INDUSTRY BY COMBINING RESOURCES AND COLLECTIVE EFFORT ALIKE.



THE COOPERATIVE HAD SOUNDTRACKED THEIR SLIDE PRESENTATION WITH THE MAIN THEME OF "REQUIEM FOR A DREAM." SO THE EXPERIENCE WAS A FAIRLY NAUSEATING COMBINATION OF IMAGES OF POTATO FIELDS AND DISTURBING, INSISTENT MUSIC.



THEY SHOWED US THAT THE FARMERS TRY TO IMPROVE CULTIVATION TECHNIQUES AND KEEP UP TO DATE WITH NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN AGRICULTURE.



BEFORE THE BLOCKADE, THIS COOPERATIVE WAS ONE OF THE FEW THAT HAD MANAGED TO PROMOTE NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS AND OPEN UP NEW MARKETS IN THE WEST BANK AND JORDAN. THERE WAS A CONSEQUENT INCREASE IN THE LEVEL OF NETWORKING, ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCE AND COOPERATION WITH OTHER ASSOCIATIONS.

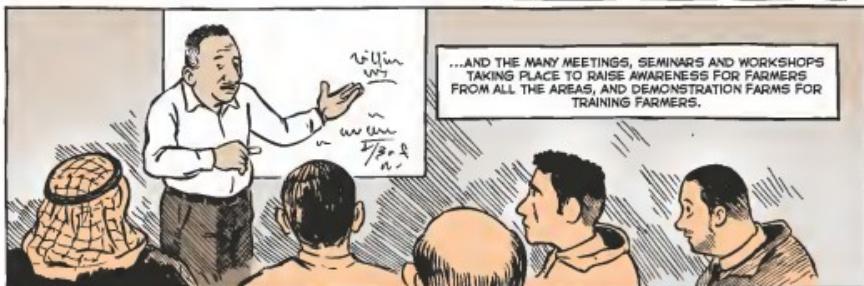
BUT NOW, EXPORTS HAD BEEN SEVERELY LIMITED BECAUSE OF ALL THE RESTRICTIONS.



OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS WERE THE RECLAMATION OF FARMING LAND AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COLLECTIVE PROJECTS WITH LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS...



...ALONG WITH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE FARMERS TO HELP ESTABLISH NEW GREENHOUSES...



...AND THE MANY MEETINGS, SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS TAKING PLACE TO RAISE AWARENESS FOR FARMERS FROM ALL THE AREAS, AND DEMONSTRATION FARMS FOR TRAINING FARMERS.

FARMERS FACE DIFFICULTIES IN TRYING TO EXPORT GOODS AND THEY CONFRONT THREE ADDITIONAL MAJOR PROBLEMS: POWER CUTS, WATER SALINATION, AND A REDUCED WATER SUPPLY.

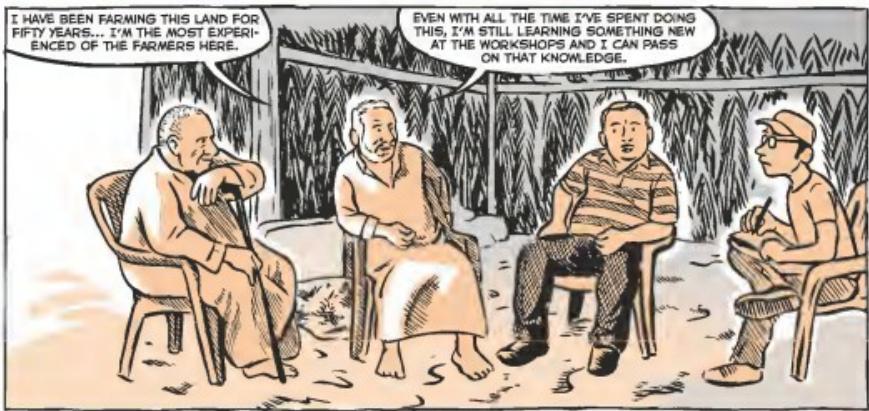


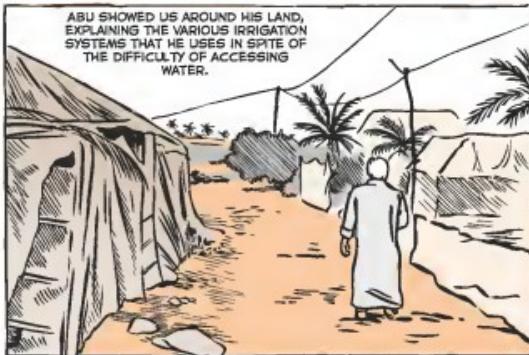
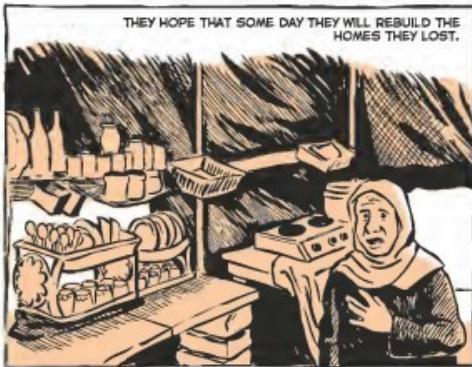
NEXT TO THE COOPERATIVE HEADQUARTERS IS THE TENT WHERE THEY PACK THEIR PRODUCE...



Produce Gaza

UNFORTUNATELY,
WE STILL CAN'T PRINT
"MADE IN PALESTINE"
ON THE CRATES SO
WE JUST INDICATE
THAT THE PRODUCE
IS FROM GAZA.





ABU SHOWED US AROUND HIS LAND,
EXPLAINING THE VARIOUS IRRIGATION
SYSTEMS THAT HE USES IN SPITE OF
THE DIFFICULTY OF ACCESSING
WATER.



...AND SHOWED US THE IMPACT OF THE HOWITZER
THAT DESTROYED THE HOUSE IN WHICH TWO
OF HIS CHILDREN DIED.

THEN WE PAID A VISIT TO ABU SAID, ANOTHER FARMER WHO IS A MEMBER OF THE COOPERATIVE. THE FRONT OF HIS BUILDING HAD BEEN RECENTLY RECONSTRUCTED.



ABU HAS FOUR SONS AND ONE DAUGHTER. THE YOUNGEST BOY, WHO HAD A DISABILITY, WAS VERY AMUSED BY MAX'S CAMERA.



KASIA GAVE US A SET OF INSTRUCTIONS: WHICH GATES TO EXIT FROM, HOW TO BEHAVE AT THE EREZ CROSSING, AND SO ON.



ANYONE WOULD
THINK WE WERE
PLANNING AN
ESCAPE FROM A
HIGH-SECURITY
PRISON!

WE FOLLOWED ALL THE ADVICE ON THE PLAN. AND THIS TIME THE SECURITY CONTROL WAS FAR MORE EXHAUSTIVE THAN WHEN WE'D ARRIVED. THEY REGISTERED OUR LUGGAGE AND WE PASSED THROUGH A FULL-BODY SCANNER.

BUT SOMETHING WENT WRONG.
AFTER THE SCAN, THE GATE
WOULDN'T OPEN FOR ME.



NOTHING...
THEY'RE EMPTY.

THEY HAD DETECTED SOME
TRULY LETHAL SHOPPING
RECEIPTS IN A HIDDEN ZIPPED
POCKET ON MY TROUSER LEG,
SO IT WAS BACK TO THE
SCANNER FOR ROUND TWO.

THE "ESCAPE" PLAN
WAS A SUCCESS.
A GETAWAY CAR WAS
WAITING FOR US
IN THE CAR PARK
AND WE RETURNED
TO JERUSALEM.



WE HAD A FREE MORNING BEFORE GOING HOME, SO WE GRABBED THE OPPORTUNITY TO SAY GOODBYE TO THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM. THERE WAS STILL SOME SIGHTSEEING TO DO...

...SUCH AS A VISIT TO HARAM AL SHARIF WITH THE COME OF THE ROCK.



ON THE OTHER SIDE, BY THE WAILING WALL, THERE WERE MULTITUDES OF SCHOOL TRIPS THAT DAY.



AND LASTLY, WE ENJOYED THE SPECTACULAR SIGHTS FROM THE TERRACED ROOF OF THE AUSTRIAN HOSPICE.

WE SAID GOODBYES TO RICARDO, HAMID AND OMAR. AS A TOKEN OF THANKS, I GAVE EACH OF THEM THEIR PORTRAITS, WHICH I'D SKETCHED WHILE CLOSETED AWAY IN THE "BUNKER" IN GAZA.

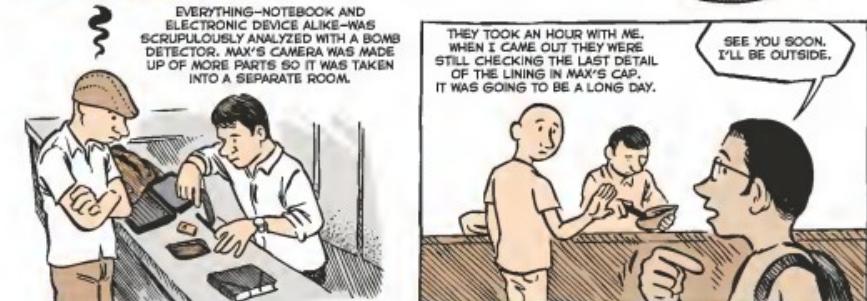
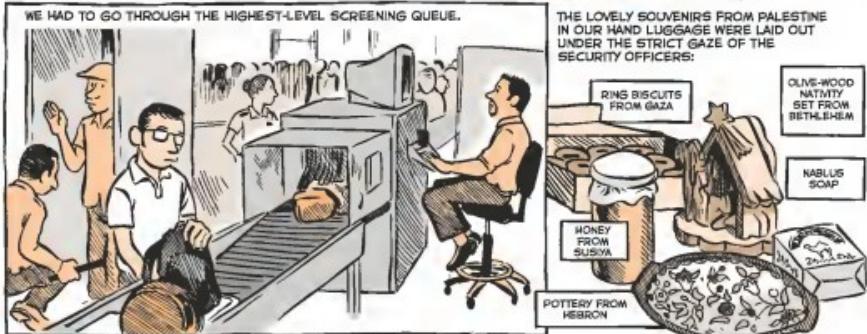
THEY REMINDED US OF THE STRICT ISRAELI SECURITY CONTROLS; AND ON THE WAY TO THE AIRPORT, MAX SUBJECTED ME ONCE MORE TO A STREAM OF THEORETICAL INTERROGATORIES.



WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR TRIP? COME ON, ANSWER ME IN ENGLISH.

OH NO, NOT AGAIN!







HOW ON EARTH DO
YOU EXPECT ME TO
CRAM ALL THAT INTO
A GRAPHIC
NOVEL??



JOE SIEGEL

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